

THE CHINESE TRADITION OF RIGHTEOUS WAR AND CHINA'S DECISIONS FOR
WAR BETWEEN 1950 AND 1979

by

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B.A., Soochow University, Taiwan, 2001
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation engages the question of what role the Chinese Righteous War Tradition (CRWT) played in the process of Chinese decision-making regarding the decisions to go to war during the period from 1950 to 1979. It asks whether, in their decision-making, the Chinese leaders identified “just cause” through a frame of reference provided by the CRWT; it asks further under what circumstances the identified “just cause” may have exerted influence upon their decision for war. This dissertation presents the first empirical study exploring the application and influence of the traditional Chinese concept of righteous war to China’s modern history.

The CRWT is my label for a set of ideas found in the ancient Chinese classics. These ideas suggest that two major standards, righteousness-based justifications and competent authority, were a frame of reference for the Chinese leaders in their assessment of the legitimacy of a decision for war. The justifications of stopping violence, punishing a disobedient state, helping a weaker state against a stronger state’s invasion, and self-defense are regularly defined in the CRWT as righteous causes for going to war. The identification of competent authority is often related to the perception of moral standing, in which a war can be justified by confronting an opponent who is morally inferior to oneself.

This dissertation employs the methods of most similar systems and process tracing to explore the role that the CRWT played in successive Chinese leaders’ decision to use force in six cases – the Korean War, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the Sino-Indian War, the Vietnam War between 1964 and 1965, the Sino-Soviet Border Conflict, and the Sino-Vietnamese War. This dissertation also examines the pattern of the Chinese government’s use of wording, presented in the *People’s Daily*, morally condemning its opponents, which provides supplementary evidence to explore China’s presentation of its own righteous legitimacy.

The findings of this research suggest that when the decision for war has been justified within this frame of reference, the Chinese are prone to put that legitimized decision into action. The Chinese concept of righteous war may play a more important role in the decision for war when Chinese leaders encounter an impasse in which two opposite courses of action are suggested by their calculations based on *Realpolitik*. A sense of the righteous legitimacy of their

decision may encourage Chinese leaders to enter a war even when the likely consequence may not appear to favor the Chinese. Furthermore, these findings may well enrich Johnson and Tierney's theory about the shift of actors' mind-sets in decision-making because the CRWT may function as a catalyst for the shift. This research also reveals that the CRWT had limited influence when Chinese leaders faced the danger of a possible invasion by a superior opponent or that of nuclear attack. When the need for a decision for war was not open to debate, then, they were not influenced by the consideration of just cause when making their decision.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Research Question, Purpose, and Definitions

War is brutal, savage, and horrible. War brings various forms of damage to the life of mankind, such as the killing of people, ruin of the environment, retardation of economic development, and spread of disease.¹ War is probably the most destructive form of human behavior,² and it is only rarely seen as a good in itself. Nevertheless, although war brings destruction to human society, the philosophers of war tell us that not all kinds of war are prohibited and certain types of war are morally permissible. The principles of just war are commonly the yardstick for gauging whether a particular war is permissible.

The Western tradition of just war (or just war tradition) is the mainstream conception nowadays for studying the justice of war and guiding moral assessment of wars. In his recent book, David Fisher provides a workable summary to illustrate the Western tradition of just war.³ Fisher points out that the just war tradition can be traced back to St. Augustine⁴, who in the fifth century AD pondered whether a Christian may engage in war without sin.⁵ St Augustine's conclusion set the fundamental concept of just war tradition, specifically, that a Christian could engage in war, but only if the war was just.⁶ The concept of just war began to be shaped into recognizable modern form by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, who argued that three

¹ Jack S. Levy and William R. Thompson, *Causes of War* (West Sussex, U.K.: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2010), 1.

² Ibid.

³ David Fisher, *Morality and War: Can War be Just in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁴ Aristotle was probably the first philosopher who mentioned the ethical stipulation that war must be fought on account of (re)establishing peace; but this sort of idea seems to have had no significant effect on pre-Roman Greek practice. In the first century, Marcus Tullius Cicero put forward as a condition for a war to be just that "the pursuit of peace must be the foremost aim of any war; without the pursuit of peace a war cannot be just." St. Augustine's thinking about just war was built on the fusion of Cicero's argument for just war and the dicta from the Hebrew Bible and the Christian New Testament. See, Beatrice Heuser, *The Evolution of Strategy: Thinking War from Antiquity to the Present* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 44-46.

⁵ David Fisher, *Morality and War*, 64.

⁶ Ibid.

things – “the authority of the prince,” “a just cause,” and “a right intention” – required to justify a war.⁷ In the sixteenth century, a crucial contribution to the just war tradition was made by Francisco de Vitoria, who offered an extended and systematic account of just war as a universal principle, established by natural law, applicable to anyone, anywhere, and anytime.⁸ But after the sixteenth century the tradition was largely neglected.⁹ In the second half of the twentieth century, the just war tradition was rediscovered and developed further to furnish an ethical framework for the debate over the morality of nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Today, the just war tradition has been largely shaped by contemporary scholars, such as Michael Walzer, who attempt to work out a modern framework of just war theory through the exploration of the medieval tradition.¹¹

The just war tradition has two sets of principles to test if a war is just, which are *jus ad bellum* – the right to fight, which concerns the morality of going to war – and *jus in bello*, which concerns the morality of what is done within war.¹² The principle of *jus ad bellum* includes six criteria: just cause, proportionate cause, right intention, right authority, reasonable prospect of success, and last resort.¹³ There are two criteria under the principle of *jus in bello*, which are discrimination and proportionality.¹⁴ Recently, another principle has been suggested and

⁷ Ibid., 65

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ David Fisher, *Morality and War*, 65.

¹¹ See Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

¹² Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, *Just War - The Just War Tradition: Ethics in Modern Warfare* (New York: Walker & Company, 2007), 11

¹³ Just cause means that a just war must have a proper reason for going to war. Proportionate cause means that the cause must be weighty enough to warrant the massive step of engaging in war, with all its certain or likely evils. Right intention means that the aim of war must be to create a better, more just and more lasting subsequent peace than there would have been had the actor not gone to war. Right authority means that the decision to go to war must be made by someone with proper authority to undertake so grave a step. Reasonable prospect of success means that the war must see a reasonable chance of succeeding in the just aim. Last resort means that the war must not be waged unless every other way of adequately securing the just aim has been tried and has been ineffective. All of the explanations are mentioned in Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, *Just War - The Just War Tradition.*, 12-14.

¹⁴ Discrimination means that in the conduct of the war a combatant must not deliberately attack the innocent.

Proportionality means that a combatant must not take action in which the incidental harm done is an unreasonably

discussed – *jus post bellum*, the need to ensure justice after war.¹⁵ To political scientists, the study of just war tradition is not merely a theoretical debate but has the potential to explain a state's behavior in using force. Michael Butler applied “just war” theory to “a set of U.S. military intervention decisions to assess conditions in which considerations of justice may have driven U.S. decisions to employ military force in international crisis.”¹⁶ Butler found that the relevance of the principle of *jus ad bellum* in U.S. decisions to intervene militarily during the Cold War era – as well as the specific primacy of the just cause precept of that principle – was statistically confirmed.¹⁷

It should be noticed that the above account of just war is a Western-rooted, or even a Eurocentric, tradition of understanding the morality of war. This argument begs the question whether non-Western civilizations have their own visions of the justice of war, or whether the principles of just war are universal. Edmund Ryden has argued that the texts of Chinese and Western just war tradition do not prove that there is a Western just war theory or a Chinese one, because all come to roughly similar thinking.¹⁸ Indeed, the very basic idea of just war might be a universal principle that all civilizations would agree upon. However, some scholars have recently suggested that a certain degree of diversity has existed in the actual criteria of *jus ad bellum*, *jus in bello*, and *jus post bellum* developed by Western and Asian just war thinkers.¹⁹ The various criteria for the just use of armed force are reflect the very diverse religious, philosophical, ideological, and cultural foundations which informed and conditioned the different perspectives

heavy price to incur for the likely military benefit. All of the explanations are mentioned in Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, *Just War - The Just War Tradition.*, 14.

¹⁵ David Fisher, *Morality and War*, 79.

¹⁶ Michael J. Butler, “U.S. Military Intervention in Crisis, 1945-1994: An Empirical Inquiry of Just War Theory,” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*. 47, no.2 (2003), 226.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁸ Edmund Ryden SJ, *Just War and Pacifism: Chinese and Christian Perspective in Dialogue* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 2001), 123.

¹⁹ Howard M. Hensel ed., *The Prism of Just War: Asian and Western Perspectives on the Legitimate Use of Military Force* (Surrey and Vermont: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2010), 274; and also see Torkel Brekke ed., *The Ethics of War in Asian Civilizations: A Comparative Perspective* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006). Taking the Chinese concept of the justice of war, for example, Chinese thinkers rarely mentioned the principle of reasonable hope of success, but often highlighted the necessity of being virtuous when they discussed the criteria for just war.

held by Western and Asian just war theorists.²⁰ This argument further suggests that, to fully understand the nature of these diverse perspectives and approaches concerning the legitimate use of armed force, one must realize and appreciate the importance of the theological, philosophical, ideological, and cultural foundations which shape individual and group perspectives regarding the just use of armed force.²¹ Thus, taking Butler's findings into account, another question can be asked: Would a non-Western civilization actually assess whether to go to war by applying perspectives coming from a theory of the just use of armed force that had developed from its own religious, philosophical, ideological, and cultural foundation.

China provides a good opportunity to test the connection between a non-Western civilization's decisions to go to war and its principles concerning the just use of armed force. Chinese culture can be clearly categorized as a non-Western culture. Even though Chinese culture has experienced several periods of cultural integration with other civilizations²², its main foundation, including elements such as Confucianism, remains in existence and continues to exert influence upon the Chinese people. As a subset of Chinese culture, the Chinese tradition of just war has a long history of development. It can be seen as early as in the Spring and Autumn period (c. 771 – 476 BCE) when there was discussion about the legitimate use of armed force.

Those elements of the Chinese notion of just war which stress ideas that are not especially prominent in Western tradition are worth noting. Recently scholars have explored the idea of punishment, including punishment of moral depravity, which contributes one of the fundamental elements in the Chinese tradition of just war.²³ The idea of the restoration of proper order is also

²⁰ Howard M. Hensel, *The Prism of Just War: Asian and Western Perspectives on the Legitimate Use of Military Force*, 274.

²¹ Ibid.

²² For example, Buddhism from South Asia and Manchurian culture under the rule of the Qing dynasty (1644-1912).

²³ See Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995); Wang Yuan-Kang, *Harmony and War: Confucian culture and Chinese Power Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Mark E. Lewis, "The Just War in Early China," in *The Ethics of War in Asian Civilizations: A Comparative Perspective*, 185-200; Karen Turner, "War, Punishment, and The Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of The State," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53, no. 2 (1993): 285-324; and McNeal, *Conquer and Govern: Early Chinese Military Texts from the Yizhou Shu* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012).

emphasized by Confucianism to explain the legitimate use of force.²⁴ The ancient Chinese view of the world as fundamentally hierarchical, dominated by the Son of Heaven, informs these elements.²⁵

The existence of a Chinese tradition of just war offers Chinese a ready-made framework for assessing the justice of war. Moreover, until very recently, most Chinese leaders were locally educated and trained. This suggests that the Chinese tradition of just war should have had ample opportunity to exert influence on Chinese leaders' thought about warfare and on their decisions to go to war. Those considerations lead to the central questions of this research: *Did Chinese leaders consider just cause when making decisions for war? If so, did the traditional Chinese concept of just war provide a frame of reference for identifying just cause? And under what circumstances did the considerations of just cause actually exert influence upon the decision to go to war?*

The Chinese tradition of just war originated mostly from a central belief in Confucianism about the relationship between the doctrines of benevolence (*Ren*, 仁) and righteousness (*Yi*, 義). For Confucians, benevolence is not a naïve doctrine to love all people equally or tolerate everything; instead it should be coordinated with righteousness. As an old but popular Chinese saying puts it, “if this can be endured, who cannot be endured!” (*shikeren shubukeren*, 是可忍, 孰不可忍).²⁶ That is, there are limits to what one must tolerate. The Chinese frequently use this proverb to describe or legitimate their actions, including violence, in response to what they take to be intolerable behavior. In other words, any pattern of behavior which violates or hinders the principles of righteousness is intolerable and demands correction. War, a form of violence, should not be excluded from this sort of logic. In traditional Chinese thought concerning the just use of armed force, war is morally permissible when it serves to fulfill the demands of benevolence and righteousness. This sort of military campaign is called righteous war (*yizhan*, 義戰), and the forces being used in this war are a righteous army (*yibing*, 義兵). Hence, it is appropriate to rephrase the Chinese tradition of just war as the Chinese tradition of righteous war or the Chinese Righteous War Tradition (hereafter, CRWT) to describe Chinese thought about

²⁴ More discussion and evidence will be provided in Chapter 2.

²⁵ Detailed discussion is provided in Chapter 2.

²⁶ Anonymous, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley (New York: Random House, 1938), 94.

the justice of war. Since this research examines the role of Chinese concept of righteous war in Chinese decision-making between 1950 and 1979, the central questions can be rephrased as:

1. *Did Chinese leaders consider just cause when making decisions for war between 1950 and 1979?*
2. *If so, did the traditional Chinese concept of righteous war (or CRWT) provide a frame of reference for identifying just cause?*
3. *And under what circumstances did the considerations of just cause actually exert influence upon the decision to go to war?*

In the CRWT, the justice of war also includes two main principles - the right reasons for going to war and right conduct within war – which are equivalent to the principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* in Western tradition of just war.²⁷ This research will focus on the discussion of the criteria determining the right to go to war (*jus ad bellum*), which theoretically provide Chinese a basis for moral assessment to gauge their decision for war.

For defining war, this research mainly adopts Brian Orend's definition that "*war should be understood as an actual, intentional, and widespread armed conflict between political communities.*"²⁸ Mentioning political communities means that both international and civil wars are all included. But this research will mainly focus on international wars, since Chinese decisions whether or not to go to war when confronting a foreign power in a crisis situation are the main object to be examined. Although Orend does not define the armed conflict specifically, this research regards it as fighting between armed forces of political communities, which at least one of the belligerent political communities has organized and planned.²⁹ This fighting must have actually occurred, have an intention, and be widespread, which means that isolated clashes and border patrol incidents should not be counted.³⁰ In other words, there is no real war until at least one of the belligerents intends to go to war and fight, and not until they do so with a heavy

²⁷ David A. Graff, "The Chinese Concept of Righteous War," in *The Prism of Just War: Asian and Western Perspectives on the Legitimate Use of Military Force*, 195-216.

²⁸ Brian Orend, *The Morality of War* (Toronto, Canada: Broadview Press, 2006), 2. Italics in the original text.

²⁹ Here I borrow partly from Hedley Bull's idea defining war as organized violence carried on by political units against each other. See Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 178.

³⁰ Brian Orend, *The Morality of War*, 2

quantum of force.³¹ Thus, a “Chinese decision to go to war” is defined as the Chinese intention, in a foreign crisis, to engage in an actual armed conflict with a heavy quantum of force.

Significance and Argument

The study of the CRWT is a relatively undeveloped field of Chinese studies, and literature regarding it is somewhat scarce. The current literature on the CRWT mainly exists in the works of political scientists who study Chinese strategic culture and historians who are expert in Chinese history. Certainly those literatures contribute significantly to the understanding of Chinese thought regarding just war. However, these bodies of literatures leave several gaps and unresolved questions in the study of the Chinese tradition of righteous war. This research has the potential to remedy some of these deficiencies.

One issue emerging from these bodies of literature is that existing works on Chinese strategic culture consistently overlook the meanings and implication of the CRWT. Scholars of Chinese strategic culture have asked whether Chinese culture influences the decision to use force against external threats. One debate examines whether Chinese culture, especially the doctrine of Confucianism, constrained China’s propensity to use armed force within a defensive mindset.³² Those scholars do take notice of ideas from the Chinese tradition of righteous war. But they tend to regard the Chinese tradition of righteous war as an unimportant element in the Chinese leaders’ decisions for war. As mentioned earlier and as will be discussed in more detail later, Confucianism and some other of traditional Chinese thought were certainly not radically pacifist and did not oppose to all sorts of violence including the use of force and war. A war would be morally permissible when it was recognized as a righteous act, and the test was meeting the criteria of the Chinese concept of righteous war. In other words, Chinese elites might be more than willing to go to war if the morality of their decision was confirmed by this assessment. This

³¹ Ibid.

³² See John K. Fairbank, “Varieties of the Chinese Military Experience,” in *Chinese Ways in Warfare*. ed. by Frank A. Kierman and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 1-26; Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism*; Andrew Scobell, *China’s Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Huiyun Feng, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Confucianism, Leadership and War* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2007); Wang Yuan-Kang, *Harmony and War*.

theoretical possibility is rarely mentioned by scholars of Chinese strategic culture.³³ This study, thus, provides an opportunity to examine this theoretical possibility which will enrich, as well as correct some misunderstandings in, the study of Chinese strategic culture.

Although overlooked by political scientists, the discussion about the theoretical basis of the Chinese tradition of righteous war has benefited from the work of historians who have traced and examined the origins of Chinese thought about the justice of war.³⁴ Their works present students of the Chinese tradition of righteous war with an essential discussion of the fundamental concepts in Chinese thought regarding the justice of war. However, an empirical study has not yet been conducted by any of those historians to test the validity of the theoretical arguments they have explored. The lack of empirical study may weaken the value of the assumptions and implications that the CRWT may suggest, especially when one questions the actual effect of the CRWT upon Chinese decision-making. An empirical study proving an actual application of the CRWT will not only strengthen the theoretical arguments but also benefit policy makers who attempt to understand China's use of force.

Therefore, I argue that a rethinking of the implications and value of the CRWT is needed, and it ought to pay attention to the influence of the CRWT on Chinese decisions for war. Since ideas in the CRWT provide a theoretical framework for Chinese in their moral assessment of decision-making, it should not be neglected when one attempts to understand the pattern of China's use of force. This research will test this argument through the first empirical study to examine the actual application and influence of the CRWT.

³³ Nadine Godehardt is probably the only political scientist who emphasizes the implications of CRWT and its applicability to analyze China's foreign policy. But she only points out the theoretical argument without a rigid empirical study. See Nadine Godehardt, "The Chinese Meaning of Just War and its Impact on the Foreign Policy of the People's Republic of China," *GIGA Working Paper* no. 88 (September, 2008), <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1287161>.

³⁴ See Mark E. Lewis, "The Just War in Early China," 185-200; Karen Turner, "War, Punishment, and The Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of The State," 285-324; James A. Strohle, "Justification of War in Ancient China," *Asian Philosophy* 8, no. 3 (1998): 165-190; Edmund Ryden SJ, *Just War and Pacifism: Chinese and Christian Perspective in Dialogue*; Graff, "The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War," 195-216; and Robin McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, ch. 2.

Outline of the Study

The remainder of this dissertation proceeds as follows: Chapter Two reviews both the literature concerning the CRWT and the ancient Chinese classics containing the concepts relating to righteous war. It then develops a theory to explain the relationship between the CRWT and China's decisions for war. It also describes the research design and method. Chapters Three to Eight discuss the empirical cases that include six major foreign conflicts between 1950 and 1979, which are the Korean War, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, the Sino-Indian War, the Vietnam War between 1964 and 1965, the Sino-Soviet border conflict, and the Sino-Vietnamese War. The last chapter provides the conclusion and directions for future work.

Chapter 2 - Chinese Tradition of Righteous War

Unlike the Western tradition of just war, the CRWT was not rooted in a religious frame of reference, originating instead from the ancient Chinese philosophies of human behavior, governance, and warfare. Scholars of the Chinese tradition of righteous war have discerned this relationship through their close study of early Chinese classics. This chapter begins with a review of the current literature regarding the origins and evolution of the Chinese tradition of righteous war, as well as the role that the tradition may have played in Chinese decision-making. This review of the literature aims to situate the concept of righteous war within the overall philosophical frame of the ancient Chinese classics and present the basic elements of the theoretical arguments that have already been made regarding the role of the CRWT. This chapter, then, develops a theoretical argument about the relationship between the ideas of the CRWT and China's decision for war through a survey of the Chinese classics. My hypothesis is that the Chinese are prone to go to war only when such action is justified by the CRWT. This chapter ends with the illustration of research design and methods used to conduct the study.

Review of Literature

The current literature regarding the Chinese tradition of righteous war can be categorized according to three themes. First, the origins of the CRWT are often mentioned by historians. The second theme, which always accompanies the first, includes the key elements of the CRWT. The last area of discussion addresses the argument for the role of the CRWT in China's decision to use armed force.

The origins of the CRWT are debatable, and opinions vary according to how scholars interpret the relevant Chinese classics in the historical context. Some scholars have noticed that the process of the establishment of the Zhou dynasty (11th century BCE), which was described by several Chinese historical records in the succeeding periods, displayed early Chinese thought about legitimizing the use of armed force.³⁵ But those records are usually recognized as a

³⁵ See Graff, "The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War," 195-216; and Robin McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, ch. 2.

supplement to understanding the CRWT rather than taken as proof about the CRWT's origins, because their creation cannot be traced back to the early Zhou dynasty.

Mark Edward Lewis argues that the doctrine of righteous force (*yi bing*, 義兵) appeared during the Warring States (481-221 BCE) and Qin (221-207 BCE) periods, when a single autocratic ruler was emerging at the center of the Chinese states.³⁶ He argues that the doctrine of righteous war was connected to the idea that “proper warfare was possible only under the command of a semi-divine ruler who brought killing in the world of men into harmony with the violence of nature.”³⁷ It is true that a more complete theory of righteous war, as Lewis argued, appeared after the Warring States period, but the early ideas of moral permission for war in the late Spring and Autumn period (c. the 6th century BCE) should not be ignored, for example Confucius's comments on war in the *Analects of Confucius*. The early Chinese classics cited by scholars who study the Chinese concept of righteous war may help us understand the currently recognized origins of the CRWT (see Table 2-1). As the table shows, the earliest classics cited and examined by scholars include the *Analects of Confucius*, *Daodejing*, and *Sunzi Bingfa*, which can all probably be dated to the late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States periods.

³⁶ Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 185.

³⁷ Ibid.

Table 2.1 The Early Chinese Classics Cited in the Modern Scholarship on the CRWT

Chinese Classics	Cited by	Approximate Date for Creation*
<i>Analects of Confucius</i> (論語)	Graff; Wang; Stroble; and Godehardt.	Late Spring and Autumn Period
<i>Daodejing</i> (道德經)	Graff; Ryden; and Stroble.	Late Spring and Autumn Period
<i>Sunzi Bingfa</i> (孫子兵法)	Graff; Ryden; Lewis; Stroble; and Godehardt.	Late Spring and Autumn Period
<i>Mencius</i> (孟子)	McNeal; Graff; Ryden; Stroble; and Godehardt.	Warring States Period
<i>Xunzi</i> (荀子)	Graff; Wang; Ryden; Stroble; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Guanzi</i> (管子)	McNeal; Graff; Ryden; Lewis; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Zuo Zhuan</i> (左傳)	McNeal; Graff; Lewis; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Guo Yu</i> (國語)	Ryden; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Shang Shu</i> (尚書)	Lewis.	Warring States Period
<i>Mozi</i> (墨子)	McNeal; Graff; Johnston; and Ryden.	Warring States Period
<i>The Book of Lord Shang</i> (商君書)	Graff; Lewis; Stroble; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Hanfeizi</i> (韓非子)	Graff; Lewis; Stroble; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Jingfa</i> (經法)	Ryden; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Annals of Lü Buwei</i> (呂氏春秋)	McNeal; Graff; Ryden; Lewis; Sellmann; and Turner.	Warring States Period
<i>Yizhoushu</i> (逸周書)	McNeal; and Graff.	Warring States Period
<i>The Rites of Zhou</i> (周禮)	Graff; and Johnston.	Warring States Period
<i>Wuzi</i> (吳子兵法)	Graff; Ryden; and Lewis.	Warring States Period
<i>Taigong Liutao</i> (六韜)	Graff; Johnston; and Ryden.	Warring States Period

Table 2-1 (Continued)

Chinese Classics	Cited by	Approximate Date for Creation*
<i>Sima Fa</i> (司馬法)	McNeal; Graff; Johnston; Lewis; and Godehardt.	Warring States Period
<i>Yuliaozi</i> (尉繚子)	Graff; Johnston; and Ryden.	Warring States Period
<i>Zhanguoce</i> (戰國策)	Graff.	Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE)
<i>San Lue</i> (三略)	Graff; Johnston; and Godehardt.	Western Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 9 AD)
<i>Da Dai Li Ji</i> (大戴禮記)	Ryden.	Western Han Dynasty
<i>Huainanzi</i> (淮南子)	McNeal; Graff; Ryden; Lewis; and Turner.	Western Han Dynasty
<i>Shuoyuan</i> (說苑)	McNeal.	Western Han Dynasty

* This column can only indicate the approximate dates, because scholars still cannot precisely pinpoint the actual authors and dates for creation for most of these classics.

Sources: Lewis, “The Just War in Early China”; Graff, “The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War”; McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*; Johnston, *Cultural Realism*; Wang, *Harmony and War*; Ryden SJ, *Just War and Pacifism*; Stroble, “Justification of War in Ancient China”; Turner, “War, Punishment, and The Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of The State”; and Godehardt, “The Chinese Meaning of Just War and its Impact on the Foreign Policy of the People’s Republic of China.”

The Chinese classics cited above were actually the foundational texts of the major schools of Chinese thought, such as Confucians, Taoists, Mohists (*Mojia*, 墨家), Militarists, and Legalists. However, those multiple origins increase the difficulty in identifying the nature and origin of the Chinese tradition of righteous war. Fortunately, after two decades of effort, scholars have discovered the basic concepts, as well as providing several different perspectives explaining the nature of the Chinese tradition of righteous war.

In general, early Chinese thinkers regarded war as wrong in principle³⁸, as an unfortunate product of human society³⁹, or even as an evil⁴⁰. But they did not deny that war was an

³⁸ Turner, “War, Punishment, and The Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of The State,” 296.

³⁹ Stroble, “Justification of War in Ancient China,” 168-169.

unavoidable fact of human life.⁴¹ Like their western counterparts, the early Chinese philosophers believed that certain types of warfare were morally permissible or justifiable.⁴² Those types of war should be waged only for a just cause along with the goal of bringing peace and order to the world.⁴³ Self-defense was not the only just cause that Chinese thinkers recognized. Scholars have noticed that the administration of punishment upon a bad actor also provided a philosophical pillar for justice in the CRWT.⁴⁴ In other words, war was regarded, as McNeal puts it, as “homologous with punitive measures taken against criminals, differing only in scale.”⁴⁵ Moreover, Chinese ideas about punishment, including justification of the use of military force applied externally to enemy states, are believed to have originated from the notion of righteousness (yi, 義), which implied that punishment was not only, as McNeal notes, “a morally proper way to treat someone or to behave, but a morally proper code of conduct defined in terms of one’s position in a complex web of social relations.”⁴⁶ In some sense, righteousness means “controlling or ordering things as they should be.”⁴⁷

The linkage between war and the notion of righteousness suggests that the matter of morality was a key concept for the Chinese to legitimize their use of force. As Yuan-Kang Wang observed, in Chinese thinking about the justice of war, “a use of force is justified when the ruler of another state is morally depraved.”⁴⁸ Scholars have found that this idea appeared when the early Chinese thinkers sought paradigms of the proper way to use force through exploring the cases of ancient sage kings’ use of punitive expeditions.⁴⁹ Those cases

⁴⁰ Ryden SJ, *Just War and Pacifism*, 36.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 185.

⁴³ Graff, “The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War,” 196; Turner, “War, Punishment, and The Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of The State,” 297; and Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 185.

⁴⁴ Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 185; Turner, “War, Punishment, and The Law of Nature in Early Chinese Concepts of The State,” 292-293; McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 41; and Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 69.

⁴⁵ McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 41.

⁴⁶ In this regard, righteousness is “both situational and hierarchical.” McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 41.

⁴⁷ Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 70

⁴⁸ Wang, *Harmony and War*, 18.

⁴⁹ For example, McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 52-53; Graff, “The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War,” 195; Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 190-193.

demonstrated that the sage kings were morally bound to go to war against a state in disorder or against a state in flagrant violation of accepted standards of political behavior.⁵⁰

With regard to the role of the CRWT in decision-making, scholars bring out two sorts of arguments. Huiyun Feng argues that the Chinese concept of righteous war has served as the final criterion for Chinese leaders to judge whether they should use military force when their nonviolent solutions, which were given the first priority, had failed.⁵¹ In strong contrast to Feng's argument, others have regarded the Chinese concept of righteous war as a moral cloak which covers acts of aggression.⁵² In fact, these arguments point to the central questions of this research: Did the CRWT provide a set of criteria that was actually used by China's leaders to assess their decisions to go to war?

A Theory of Chinese Righteous War

This section, which is divided into four sub-sections, searches for a theory of Chinese righteous war. First, to grasp the fundamental concept underlying Chinese thinking about righteous war, I briefly discuss the key ideas of Chinese thinking about morality. In the second and third parts I explore the main ideas of the CRWT, *righteousness-based justification* and *competent authority*, which may offer a framework of criteria that could be used by Chinese for decision-making. Although the current literature provides a good clue for tracing the CRWT in the Chinese classics, I selected only the ancient texts that had significant influence upon the Chinese tradition or are frequently cited by scholars. In addition, I mainly adopted Graff's framework⁵³ to guide my examination tracing and rearranging the scattered Chinese concepts. In the fourth part, I discuss my assumption regarding the relationship between the CRWT and

⁵⁰ McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 43.

⁵¹ Huiyun Feng, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, 26-27.

⁵² Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1982), 104; and Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 252. Graff quoted Waley's comments on righteous war in his research, but he made a moderate argument that the doctrine of righteous war "performed much the same function of reconciling philosophical principles with everyday practice, and may have played an even larger role in legitimizing the resort to arms in ancient and imperial China." Graff, "The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War," 211.

⁵³ Graff explores the ideas of justification, competent authority, and *jus in bello* by tracing their appearance in the ancient Chinese classics.

Chinese decisions to go to war, particularly the function of the CRWT in such decisions, as well as provide the central hypothesis and the research method.

The Key Logic behind the CRWT

As mentioned earlier, the notion of righteousness (*yi*, 義) is the central logic of the CRWT. According to the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*zhongyong*, 中庸), a chapter in the *Han Record of Rites* (*Liji*, 禮記), “righteousness is the principle of setting things right and proper, and the greatest application of it is in honoring the worthy.”⁵⁴ Although what sorts of acts constitute “right/proper” behavior is not clearly defined in Confucianism, certain guidelines and doctrines can help us to understand. Confucians often see righteousness, rites, and laws as a trinity to guide human behavior.⁵⁵ This viewpoint about righteousness implies that acts in accordance with rites and laws are naturally right, and so they are acts that human beings should perform. However, in human society, there are always plenty of gray zones which are not specifically dictated by rites and laws. In such situations, what kind of acts can be justified as righteous? More specifically, what kind of acts can be justified as righteous in politics? Confucius once gave a short answer by replying to a question about government from Duke Jing of Qi: “Let the prince be a prince, the minister a minister, the father a father and the son a son.”⁵⁶ These four suggestions, especially the first two, establish the basic order for conducting the “right” acts in politics that everyone (including the ruler) needs to perform in order to fulfill their social duties and the responsibilities that stem from their positions. For the Chinese, being virtuous is generally considered as one of these fundamental duties that apply not only to ordinary people but also to rulers and governments.

⁵⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, trans. and comp., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973), 104. Irene Bloom has proposed “rightness” as an alternative translation of *yi* or *i* (義). See Irene Bloom, trans., “The Mean,” in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, comp., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 336. “Righteousness,” however, continues to predominate throughout the relevant secondary literature; therefore, it is adopted in this dissertation.

⁵⁵ Ching-Piao Kang, “Just War Thought of the Pre-Qin Period,” *WHAMPOA - An Interdisciplinary Journal*, no. 51(2006), 130

⁵⁶ Anonymous, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley, 166.

In Confucianism, virtue can be categorized into two types. The first type is about the ruler's political and diplomatic actions, which is called "benevolent administration/policy" (*de zheng*, 德政); the second refers to personal behavior and moral self-improvement, which is called "moral conduct" (*de xing*, 德行).⁵⁷ Usually a ruler who can bring stability to the people, conduct a broad-minded policy, follow the etiquette system of the rites, receive admonitions without displeasure, respect ethical principles, and externally implement a generous and peace-first policy and not use his power to bully neighboring rulers will be regarded as a ruler having benevolent policy.⁵⁸ As with benevolent policy, there are many virtues and principles regarding moral conduct, including being honest and loyal, and having filial piety, righteousness, valor, modesty, and wisdom.⁵⁹ As a result of indistinct and overlapping definitions, some ideas, such as benevolence and righteousness, may appear redundant in this context. Nevertheless, those concepts indeed show that rites, laws, and virtue are the fundamental elements defining what righteousness should be in politics.

Righteousness-based Justifications

Confucianism is an unavoidable topic when scholars attempt to explore the CRWT. In general, Confucians' attitude toward warfare is to be passive and prudent. This attitude does not require Confucians to abandon entirely the resort to force. For Confucians, not all wars need to be condemned; only unrighteous wars deserved to be stopped and punished. According to Confucianism, an unrighteous war is one driven by greed and self-interest.⁶⁰ Because this kind of war will kill people savagely and put the aggressor state itself in danger, it must be condemned and stopped.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Chen Lai, *Gudai Sixiang Wenhua de Shijie: Chunqiu Shiqi de Zongjiao Lunli yu Shehui Sixiang* (The World of Ancient Thought and Culture: Thoughts of Religion, Morality, and Society in the Spring and Autumn Period) (Beijing: Sdx Joint Publishing Company, 2002), 216-254.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 216-254.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 269.

⁶⁰ See Dai De, *Dadai Liji* (Beijing, China: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985), Chapter 33 Use of Force.

⁶¹ Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*, trans James Legge (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), 305.

In Confucianism, righteous war can be characterized as a war fought to forbid savage behavior or to stop violence.⁶² In explaining why a humane and benevolent man needs to wage war, the influential Confucian philosopher Xunzi (313-238 BCE) said:

That humanity of which I spoke does indeed involve loving others, but it is just such love for others that causes a hatred of whoever does injury to them. That morality of which I spoke does involve acting in accord with rational order, but it is precisely according with rational order that causes a hatred of whoever disrupts it. The military principles of which I spoke are just the means whereby to prohibit violent and aggressive behavior and to prevent harm to others; they are not the means to contention and confiscation.⁶³

This logic suggests that it is both “right” and necessary to use force to correct wrongdoings that violate the principle of benevolence and righteousness, because such wrongdoings threaten the central ethics that Confucianism regards as sustaining the operation of human society.

Another concept of righteous war can be derived from this comment, namely, that a war to maintain and restore political order (specifically, the feudal system at that time⁶⁴) is also justifiable. Confucius once asked his own master, the Duke of Lu, to send a punitive expedition to restore the political order and punish the misbehavior caused within a neighboring state, Qi, where the minister Chen Heng had murdered his ruler.⁶⁵ Chen Heng’s crime, in Confucius’s view, was an intolerable misbehavior which violated not only righteousness, but also the rites and laws.

Confucius’s idea of a punitive expedition is echoed in the methods of maintaining a political system suggested to kings by the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhou Li*, 周禮), a classical Confucian blueprint

⁶² See *Da Dai Li Ji*, Chapter 33 Use of Force; Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*, trans. James Legge, 167.

⁶³ Xunzi, *Xunzi*, trans. John Knoblock (Hunan, China: Hunan People’s Publishing House, 1999), 479.

⁶⁴ This is the Western Zhou feudalism, which was termed *fengjian* in Chinese. The system of *fengjian* means literally “to establish by means of making boundaries.” The essence of this system was that “the function of the Western Zhou state was carried out by its numerous local agents, who were replicas of the Zhou central government and were centered on lineages as branches of the Zhou royal house or as marriage partners of it.” Each local agent constituted “an autonomous geographical entity located in a specific area, and was equipped with a small but complete government that enjoyed the combined rights of civil administration, legal punishment, and military authority.” The regional rulers were not independent of Zhou royal authority, rather their relationships with the Zhou king were even closer than those of the “vassals” and “lords” under the “feudo-vassalic” institutions of medieval Europe. This close relationship was based on the institution of “Lineage Law,” which served to “regulate inheritance of political authority and property through a kinship structure.” Li Feng, *Landscape and Power in Early China: The Crisis and Fall of the Western Zhou, 1045-771 BC* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 110-112.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. Arthur Waley, 186.

for government. According to the *Rites of Zhou*, a legitimate Zhou king had the right to impose sanctions against a vassal state under one or more of nine conditions.⁶⁶ Of the nine conditions, four called for correction or punishment by a punitive expedition, specifically when a vassal state killed a virtuous person and imperiled its own people, when a ruler was killed or exiled by his courtiers, when a vassal state disobeyed the kings' orders, and when a ruler transgressed the principles of human ethics and behaved like an animal (e.g., to gain power by killing his father).

The idea that war may be used to stop violence was also recorded in an important canon of Confucianism – the *Zuo Zhuan*, a chronicle of the Spring and Autumn period. The most prominent example was King Zhuang of Chu's comments on war after he defeated Jin's troops in the Battle of Bi in 597 BCE. One of his generals suggested to him that he collect and pile the corpses of the Jin soldiers in a mound to announce victory.⁶⁷ King Zhuang of Chu rejected the suggestion, saying:⁶⁸

In the written script, the stopping of weapons constitutes the martial⁶⁹.... Now in the case of the martial, it means prohibiting violence, collecting weapons, preserving the great, establishing merit, bringing peace to the people, uniting the masses, and making resources abundant. This is what causes our descendants not to forget our splendor. Today I have caused the bones of the soldiers of our two states to lay [sic] exposed on the battleground; this is violence. I have unsheathed our weapons in order to awe the feudal lords; this is not collecting weapons. Being violent and not collecting weapons – how can I hope to preserve the great? And

⁶⁶ The nine conditions are: 1) to reduce its fief when the stronger states heckle the weaker state; 2) to send a punitive expedition when the state kills virtuous persons and imperils its people; 3) to remove the rulers who brutalize their people and humiliate their neighbors; 4) to reduce his fief when the ruler does not manage his territories properly and leads his people to disperse; 5) to invade the state who does not submit itself to the emperor's orders and authority; 6) to inflict punishment upon those rulers who kill their own family members; 7) to execute the courtier who kills or exiles his ruler; 8) to cut off its relations with other states when said states disobey and defy the King's laws; 9) to put the ruler to death when he transgresses the principles of human ethic and behaves like an animal. See Anonymous, *The Rites of Zhou* (Taipei, Taiwan: Taiwan Zhonghua Book Company, 1981), chapter "The Officer of Summer: Sima."

⁶⁷ McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 48; and Yu Xian-hao, Zhou Fu-chang and Yao Man-bo, ann., *Zuo Zhuan* (Taipei: San Min Book Co., 2002), 684 and 688-689.

⁶⁸ This translation is directly quoted from McNeal's. See McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 48-49.

⁶⁹ In Chinese this sentence is “止戈為武.” Literally, it can be translated into “the graphs for ‘stop’ 止 and ‘weapon’[or dagger-axe] 戈 make the graph for ‘martial’ 武.” See McNeal, *Conquer and Govern*, 183: note 12. It also can be translated into “to stop the use of weapons and avoid war is truly military” or “real military prowess being to ensure peace.”

despite our victory, the state of Jin still survives – how can this be called establishing merit? Moreover, I have gone against the desires of the people in many ways – how can they find peace in this? Lacking virtue and grappling for power with the feudal lords – how can this unite the masses? Deriving benefit by putting others in peril, and finding peace by putting others into chaos, and then taking this as one’s own glory – how can this make resources abundant? The martial has these seven virtues, yet I haven’t a single one of them. What am I to display to my descendants?

Although the seven martial virtues that King Zhuang of Chu mentioned included certain utilitarian perspectives, the ideas of stopping violence and bringing peace to the people still occupied a prominent position in legitimizing the use of armed force. In particular, the sentence “the stopping of weapons constitutes the martial” (*zhigeweiwu*, 止戈為武) has become a common idiomatic phrase used by Chinese to explain the necessity of use of force.

While Confucianism accepted the idea of punitive expeditions, Taoism⁷⁰ insisted that only the use of force for self-defense could be justified. As the sage Laozi indicated, “sharp weapons,” with the extended meaning of military force, are ill-omened instruments.⁷¹ When he discussed a maxim about using weapons, Laozi said: “I don’t presume to act like the host, and instead play the part of the guest; I don’t advance an inch, but rather retreat a foot.”⁷² The only legitimate condition for the use of force, according to Laozi, is self-preservation in its most immediate and obvious sense.⁷³

Mohism⁷⁴, like Taoism, was a school of thought that strongly opposed offensive war, but it advocated defensive preparation.⁷⁵ Mo Di (c. 468-376 BCE), the founder of Mohism, believed

⁷⁰ Taoism is traditionally held to have been founded by Laozi (c. 6th century BCE). It is one of the major schools of thought that have influenced and shaped Chinese culture and Chinese ways of thinking. Its central belief advocates the spirit of nature and “non-action” (*wuwei*, 無為). Its political philosophy is to govern by doing nothing (*wuweierzhi*, 無為而治). See Robert G. Henricks, ed. and trans., *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching: A new translation based on the recently discovered Ma-Wang-Tui text* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989).

⁷¹ Robert G. Henricks, ed. and trans., *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 83.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷³ Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 198.

⁷⁴ Mohism was founded by Mo Di (c. 468-376 BCE). It was one of the important schools of thought in the Warring States period. Although its influence has decreased since the Qin dynasty, the central concepts of Mohism, “universal love” (*jianai*, 兼愛) and “no invasion” (*feigong*, 非攻), were already well-known by Chinese. See Ian Johnston, trans. and ann., *The Mozi: A Complete Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010)

⁷⁵ Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 199; and Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 190.

that armed aggression is no different from the crimes of robbery and murder, because it not only has the same logic in harming others to benefit oneself, but also is on a much larger scale.⁷⁶ He said:

The killing of one person is spoken of as unrighteous and certainly constitutes one capital offence. Reasoning on this basis...killing a hundred people is a hundred times as unrighteous, so certainly constitutes a hundred capital offences. If this is valid, the gentlemen of the world should all know and condemn it, and call it unrighteous. But when it comes to what is a great lack of righteousness, that is, attacking states, then they do not know and condemn it.⁷⁷

However, he didn't completely reject the idea that offensive war could be justified. Mo Di considered that the ancient sage kings' uses of force were not acts of "attack" (*gong*, 攻), but rather acts of "punishment" (*zhu*, 誅), because the war was aimed to punish vicious rulers who had offended against the will of Heaven.⁷⁸

A military intervention which rescues a weaker state from a stronger state's invasion can also be justified as a righteous use of force according to Mo Di. Refuting the common argument among rulers during the Warring States period that rulers had the right to wage war in order to establish righteousness in the world and to draw the other feudal lords to virtue, Mo Di argues that:

Now, if there was one who was able to establish himself in the world through righteousness and reputation and attract the feudal lords through virtue, the world's submission would be immediate and expected...Nowadays, if there were feudal lords in the world who were able to establish good faith in their dealings and gave primacy to benefit, then, when a great state was not righteous, they would join in grieving for it. When a great state attacked a small state, they would join in rescuing it. When the inner and outer city walls of a small state were incomplete, they would join in repairing them...If we led the people along the right path, established a reputation for righteousness, and invariably acted liberally towards our populace as well as training our forces with sincerity, and in this way supported the feudal lords, then it would be possible to have no enemies in the world....⁷⁹

In Mo Di's opinion, a ruler with virtue has the right to intervene militarily to save a weaker state from a stronger state's aggression.

⁷⁶ Graff, "The Chinese Concept of Righteous War," 199 ; and Ian Johnston trans. and ann., *The Mozi*, 169.

⁷⁷ Ian Johnston, trans. and ann., *The Mozi*, 169.

⁷⁸ Graff, "The Chinese Concept of Righteous War," 200; and Ian Johnston, trans. and ann., *The Mozi*, 188-193.

⁷⁹ Johnston, trans. and ann., *The Mozi*, 195 and 197.

The *Guanzi*⁸⁰, the *Book of Lord Shang*⁸¹, and the *Han Feizi*⁸² are three major classics of Chinese Legalism. Their authors' attitudes toward warfare are quite different from each other. The authors of *Guanzi* believe that war is dangerous to a country's survival, but it becomes necessary if waged for righteous causes. Generally, a righteous war, in *Guanzi*, refers to an act of punishment upon a state that is vicious⁸³ or does not follow the king's authority⁸⁴, or a military action for saving a state from disorder.⁸⁵ These ideas are not shared by the authors of the *Book of Lord Shang* and the *Han Feizi*. These authors considered that an aggressive war, regardless of its justification, should be viewed positively if it advanced the state's interests (*li*, 利).⁸⁶ But, in the *Book of Lord Shang*, the author says that "if by war one wishes to abolish war, even war is permissible; if by killing one wants to abolish killing, even killing is permissible; if by punishments one wishes to abolish punishments, even heavy punishments are permissible."⁸⁷ Although this statement justifies waging war, it is unclear whether the war is for self-defense or military intervention.

Although rarely discussed, the righteous causes of the resort to force did come to the attention of ancient Chinese writers on military strategy. In exploring the causes of war, the *Wuzi*⁸⁸ defines the "righteous army" as one suppressing "the violently perverse" and rescuing

⁸⁰ The contents of *Guanzi* date approximately from the Warring States period. Although it is an encyclopedic compilation of early Chinese philosophies, its contents show strong affinities with Legalism.

⁸¹ The *Book of Lord Shang* mainly records the theories and measures of the political and economic reforms in the state of Qin introduced by Shang Yang (390-338 BCE) starting from 356 BCE.

⁸² The *Han Feizi* was written by the statesman Han Fei (c. 280-233 BCE). It expounds Han Fei's political philosophy and ideas of statecraft, advocating a utilitarian perspective and the role of law in ruling.

⁸³ Anonymous, *Guanzi* (Taipei, Taiwan: Taiwan Zhonghua Book Company, 1981), Ch. 19.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. 21.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ J. J. L. Duyvendak, ed. and trans., *The Book of Lord Shang: A Classic of the Chinese School of Law* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1928), pp. 190 and 256-257; Graff, "The Chinese Concept of Righteous War," 198; and Han Fei, *Han Feizi* (Taipei, Taiwan: Taiwan Zhonghua Book Company, 1981), Ch.1.

⁸⁷ Duyvendak, ed. and trans., *The Book of Lord Shang*, 285

⁸⁸ *Wuzi*, or *Wuzi Bingfa*, is one of the *Seven Military Classics* (canonized in the Song dynasty, c. 11th century). It is generally held to record the military thought of the Warring States general Wu Qi (440-381 BCE).

“the people from chaos.”⁸⁹ The *Yuliaozi*⁹⁰ has similar opinions to those of *Wuzi* in that “the military provides the means to execute the brutal and chaotic and to stop the unrighteous.”⁹¹ This justification can also be found in the *San Lue*:⁹² “The Sage King does not take any pleasure in using the army. He mobilizes it to execute the violently perverse and punish the rebellious.”⁹³ Among the military classics, the strongest voice in favor of waging war to bolster moral order is given by the *Sima Fa*.⁹⁴ It states that “if one must kill men to give peace to the people, then killing is permissible”; “if one must attack a state out of love for their people, the attacking it is permissible”; “if one must stop war with war, although it is war it is permissible.”⁹⁵ Moreover, the nine circumstances legitimizing the imposition of sanctions in the *Rites of Zhou* were also directly quoted by the author of *Sima Fa* as conditions for the use of armed force.⁹⁶

Although most Chinese strategists expressed some ideas about righteous war, Sun Tzu, the most famous and important Chinese strategic thinker, mentioned almost nothing about it in his classic – *Sunzi Bingfa*. Unlike the works of several other thinkers who believed that moral factors would lead to victory, the *Sunzi Bingfa* concentrates more on the proper means by which to win a war. The only moral issue the *Sunzi Bingfa* mentions is the “Dao” (or “Way”), which means the leader must have the support of his people.⁹⁷ But Sun Tzu did not clearly explain whether the contents of “Dao” required the leader to garner popular support from his people by adopting benevolent administration, policy or moral conduct.

⁸⁹ Ralph D. Sawyer, ed. and trans., *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1993), 208; and Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 201-202.

⁹⁰ Of uncertain authorship, the *Yuliaozi* is one of the *Seven Military Classics* and is thought to have been written during the Warring States period.

⁹¹ Sawyer, ed. and trans., *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, 254.

⁹² One of the *Seven Military Classics*, the *San Lue* was probably written in the late Western Han dynasty (202 BCE – 9CE) and mainly focuses on the discussing the relationship between politics and military strategy.

⁹³ Ibid., 305. It is not entirely wrong that Sawyer translated the “luan” into “rebellious,” but the word “luan” is usually regarded as chaotic or disordered instead of “rebellious”.

⁹⁴ Graff, “The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War,” 202. *Sima Fa* is one of the *Seven Military Classics*. It mainly records the ancient thought of etiquette, administration, and management of military forces. Although it is probably a Warring States compilation, some of its contents may derive from the Spring and Autumn Period.

⁹⁵ Sawyer, ed. and trans., *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*, 126.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 126-127.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 157.

The era between the late Warring States period and the Han dynasty, as Lewis has argued, was a significant period for the development of the Chinese righteous war tradition.⁹⁸ Both the *Annals of Lü Buwei* and the *Huainanzi* were masterpieces displaying the evolved concepts of the CRWT.⁹⁹ In the *Annals of Lü Buwei*, the authors strongly advocate that it be considered a requirement for any armed force that one might have to be a righteous one. They treat the righteous armed force as a vital tool in maintaining order and peace. If the requirement for armed force to be righteous were abandoned, the world would become chaotic in that every state would fight the other without limits.¹⁰⁰ In their opinion, righteous armed force should be used to “punish tyrannical lords and relieve suffering peoples.”¹⁰¹ The authors of the *Huainanzi* likewise indicate that the righteous force is a necessary means for maintaining order:

In antiquity, those who used the military did not value expanding territory or covet the possession of gold and jade. They sought to sustain those who [were] perishing, revive those [lineages] that had been cut off, pacify the chaos of the world, and eliminate harm to the myriad people.¹⁰²

For this purpose, the righteous force is an essential means for maintaining order, so that “the violent are curtailed and the disorderly are punished.”¹⁰³

Thus, there are four major righteousness-based justifications that can be identified from these Chinese classics to legitimize the decision to go to war. First, the justification of **stopping violence** was regularly mentioned and constituted a central concept of early Chinese thought about the legitimate use of force. This idea usually contains three sometimes overlapping subsets, which are to restore order, to bring peace to the people, and to punish or stop a ruler’s savage behavior. The second justification is **to punish disobedient states**. The *Rites of Zhou* and *Sima*

⁹⁸ Lewis, “The Just War in Early China,” 185.

⁹⁹ Both classics were compiled by teams of authors working under the aegis of a powerful sponsor. The authors of the *Annals of Lü Buwei* was sponsored by Qin chancellor Lü Buwei and completed the compilation about 239 BCE. *Huainanzi* was completed around 139 BCE under the aegis of Liu An, Han “king” of Huainan.

¹⁰⁰ John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, eds. and trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei: A complete translation and study* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000), 175-176.

¹⁰¹ Knoblock and Riegel, eds. and trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 178; and Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 202.

¹⁰² John S. Major et al., *The Huainanzi: a Guide to the Theory and Practice of Government in Early Han China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 580 and Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 203.

¹⁰³ John S. Major et al., *The Huainanzi*, 204; and Graff, “The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War,” 203.

Fa are the two classics that mention this idea as a condition for a king's use of force. The third justification is **to help a weaker state against a stronger state's invasion**. This idea was especially brought out by the authors of the *Mozi* and *Rites of Zhou*. In ancient times, this notion referred particularly to the form of the Zhou king helping one of his weaker vassals to resist the attack from a stronger vassal. Finally, a war for **self-defense** is generally recognized as a righteous war, although the Chinese classics, except the *Daodejing* and the *Mozi*, do not explicitly express such an idea. The justification of self-defense has been given an extra meaning by modern Chinese strategists to justify an active posture in the use of force, with China projecting its armed force into other states' territory. This meaning was advanced by Chinese leaders especially in the second half of the twentieth century. For them, a defensive war is not merely a war of static defense. They advocate an "active defense" in response to what they perceive as an adversary's aggressive action.¹⁰⁴

Competent Authority

In the early Chinese thought on righteous war, the right to designate competent authority in a war was usually held to be a monopoly of the semi-divine king who received and sustained the "Mandate of Heaven" (*tianming*, 天命). The idea of receiving and keeping the Mandate of Heaven was closely related to the fundamental Chinese political and societal thought that Heaven, the King or emperor, and the People composed a trinity of the political and religious system.¹⁰⁵ The King, who was an intermediary between Heaven and the people, had responsibilities to govern the people as an agent of Heaven and to worship Heaven as the representative of the people.¹⁰⁶ The ancient Chinese believed that receipt of the Mandate depended on virtue. According to this belief, a regime starts when a person, called "the King Receiving the Mandate" (*shoumingwang*, 受命王), receives the Mandate of Heaven because of his virtue.¹⁰⁷ But his status does not automatically guarantee the Mandate for his descendants,

¹⁰⁴ Scobell, *China's Use of Force*, 28

¹⁰⁵ Ch'ien Mu, *Guo Shi Dagang* (The Outlines of National History) (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 2005), 348.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Wang Jianwen, *Feng Tian Cheng Yun: Gudai Zhongguo de Guojia Gainian ji qi Zhengdangxing Jichu* (Heaven-Sent Conveyances: the Concept and the Foundation of Validity of "State" in Ancient China) (Taipei: Dong Da Tu Shu Publishing Company), 97-98.

who must therefore keep their ancestral virtue.¹⁰⁸ In other words, the survival of the Heaven-mandated authority is conditional. Since Heaven always unselfishly and impartially loves the people¹⁰⁹, a King who improperly governs the people deserves to be abandoned by Heaven. When the power of the semi-divine king declined, the idea arose that a virtuous leader who did not yet hold the title of king could use force legitimately.

This idea shaped the early Chinese perspective on the interstate relationship¹¹⁰, which was recognized as a hierarchical structure dominated by the legitimate King, who was also called the “Son of Heaven.” Moreover, the nature of interstate relations was not recognized as chaotic (as in so much of Western political theory), but rather was understood as an order governed by the Son of Heaven, who had right to impose sanctions on those who violated his commands. As we have seen, this sort of idea is especially prominent in the *Rites of Zhou*, where the authors present nine conditions for the use of force. Mencius¹¹¹ seemed to agree with this idea when he said that “a punitive expedition is a war waged by one in authority against his subordinates,” and “it is not for peers to punish one another by war.”¹¹² To Mencius, only the Son of Heaven’s use of force could be legitimized as punishment, and a feudal lord’s use of force would be regarded as an attack.¹¹³

However, by the mid-Warring States period, the entire notion of competent authority had been undercut by the declining power of the Zhou kings¹¹⁴ (the recognized Son of Heaven at that time) and by the increasingly prevalent notion that they might be replaced by a newly emergent

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ch’ien Mu, *Guo Shi Dagang*, 348.

¹¹⁰ It will be more accurate to name this as the “feudal” relationship if according to the early political system of China. See footnote 64.

¹¹¹ Mencius (c. 372-289 BCE) was one of the important philosophers who shaped the orthodox version of Confucianism. He is recognized by Chinese as the “second sage” (*ya sheng*, 亞聖) after Confucius. Mencius believed that human nature is innately good, people are the most significant factor for ruling a state, and benevolence and righteousness should be the highest standard for the principles of behavior.

¹¹² Quoted in Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 204.

¹¹³ Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 204.

¹¹⁴ The decline in the power of the Zhou kings also caused a new reality as wars among the feudal lords increased significantly in number and came to dominate the interstate relationship. These conditions demanded a reexamination of the early notion of competent authority.

ruler of great benevolence and virtue.¹¹⁵ The matter of virtue, underlying the guarantee of the Mandate of Heaven, was central to identifying competent authority. The *Zuo Zhuan* provides a case in which the matter of virtue was seen as the premise to go to war. In 641 BCE, Duke Xiang of Song laid siege to Cao on the pretext that Cao was disobedient to his orders. One of Song's ministers, Zi Yu, asked the Duke to end the siege by bringing up the case of King Wen of Zhou's expedition against Chong, a morally depraved state. When King Wen learned that the ruler and people of Chong had behaved immorally, he decided to punish them. But his first expedition was unsuccessful, when he withdrew his troops after a futile thirty-day siege of Chong. King Wen worked on refining his morality and improving his people with virtue after he returned. When King Wen sent another expedition against Chong, the people of Chong immediately surrendered when the Zhou troops entered the camp that had been built during the first expedition. Zi Yu used this example to warn that even a sage King sometimes would have to refine his morality to make an expedition successful, let alone his master the Duke of Song, who had no virtuous standing comparable to those sage kings. Zi Yu requested that his master lift the siege, refine his morality by self-examination, and then use armed force again after all of the deficiency of morality had been corrected.¹¹⁶ The historical authenticity of Zi Yu's warnings and the example of King Wen's expedition should not be exaggerated. However, this case indicates that the author of the *Zuo Zhuan* attempted to speak through Zi Yu to emphasize the important role of morality in the decision for war.

The role of morality also received attention from the authors of the *Annals of Lü Buwei*, but they presented it from a different angle. When these authors discussed which forms of warfare could be legitimized, they said:

Now, there is no greater act of immorality and no greater harm to the peoples of the world than failing to distinguish between the moral and the immoral, and rather hurriedly adopting the policy of indiscriminate defense by "rescuing" and "protecting." Thus, it is logically inadmissible either to adopt a policy of aggressive warfare or to condemn it, to adopt a policy of defensive warfare or to condemn it. It is only the use of weapons in a righteous cause that can be considered proper. If weapons are raised in a righteous cause, then both aggressive and defensive warfare are proper. If the cause is not righteous, then neither is proper.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Graff, "The Chinese Concept of Righteous War," 205.

¹¹⁶ Yu Xian-hao, Zhou Fu-chang and Yao Man-bo, ann., *Zuo Zhuan*, 366-370

¹¹⁷ Knoblock and Riegel, eds. and trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei*, 182.

The authors further pointed out seven cases of ancient rulers who either were immoral or ruled their people savagely to explain why defensive warfare might not be righteous. Then, the authors wrote:

These seven rulers surpassed all other men in acting without the Dao and in being immoral. The innocent people they slaughtered and murdered were so numerous, they cannot be counted even by the tens of thousands. The corpses of the strong and feeble, the old and young, and the miscarried and stillborn filled the flat plains and dammed up the deep gorges and great valleys...Were an ascendant ruler or humane knight to contemplate this deeply, it surely would pain his heart and cause him grief and sadness. Were he to examine what brought this about, he would conclude that it was because of the demise of those who possess the Dao and the licentiousness of those who lack the Dao. But those who lack the Dao have been lucky in conducting themselves licentiously. Thus, the misfortune of the world does not lie in the defensive strategy of “rescuing” and “safeguarding,” but in the unworthy having been lucky. Yet if persuasions advocate defensive warfare, the unworthy are all the more fortunate and the worthy all the more hesitant. Thus, the most profound disorder to the world depends on the practice of hurriedly embracing the policy of defense without assessing the rightness of the cause.¹¹⁸

Indeed, the purpose behind this argument was to defend the legitimacy of Qin’s offensive strategy of attempting to conquer other states in the late Warring States period. But if we take Zi Yu’s argument from the *Zuo Zhuan* into account, we can see that both arguments point in the same direction, showing that moral inferiority results in the lack of a righteous cause to go to war. While the author of the *Zuo Zhuan* went in a positive direction stating that flawless morality legitimizes the use of force, the authors of the *Annals of Lü Buwei* emphasize that immorality removes the legitimacy of the use of force, even for defensive purposes.

These new ideas indicate that by the late Warring States period the Zhou kings’ monopoly in determining the competent authority among the combatants no longer existed. They also imply an idea similar to that of competent authority in the Western tradition of just war, namely that the ruler or government of a sovereign state possesses proper authority to go to war.¹¹⁹ But this idea did not survive for long after the Warring States period because most of the succeeding dynasties were centralized and unified under a ruler with the same title of “Son of Heaven” that the Zhou kings had held. This does not mean that the rulers of the succeeding dynasties abandoned the notion that morality plays an important role in legitimizing use of armed force, but rather that in

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 183-184.

¹¹⁹ The idea of competent authority in the Western tradition of just war, please see Charles Guthrie and Michael Quinlan, *Just War - The Just War Tradition.*, 12.

reality they might be more inclined to manifest the competent authority of their regime by pointing out the immorality of the opponents being punished, just as the authors of *Annals of Lü Buwei* and *Zuo Zhuan* attempted to advocate.

What succeeding generations of Chinese leaders may have learned from the origins of competent authority could be the practice of assessing the morality of their decisions to go to war. Ideally, this idea would encourage Chinese leaders to examine the relative moral standings between themselves (including the regime they lead) and the opponents they attempt to fight against. When they perceive that they are morally superior, they are certain that the decision for war is legitimate. And they are inclined to decide against war if their moral status fails to pass the examination. But the reality is that this ideal model was hardly applied to the everyday practice of warfare. The Chinese leaders might adopt a lesser standard of moral assessment such that only their opponents would be the objects of examination. As Yuan-Kang Wang observed, this idea is similar to the modern concept of “humanitarian intervention,” that a punitive expedition can be allowed to fight against a state whose ruler is found to be unjust or abusing his people.¹²⁰ This is to say that by adopting this devalued concept of competent authority, the Chinese leaders can be confident of success in legitimizing their decisions for war when the moral inferiority of their opponents is identified.

Hypothesis

Before posing the hypothesis of this research, it is necessary to understand that the ideas about righteousness-based justification and competent authority in the CRWT may not be fundamentally different from those presented in the Western tradition of just war. For example, self-defense is also regarded as a justification for war in the Western tradition. But as noted in the introduction, Chinese leaders may not be familiar with the Western doctrine of just war, but it is possible that Chinese leaders learned what morally permissible warfare should be from their own cultural tradition. Moreover, as Graff argued, several elements that are clearly addressed in the Western discourse on just war have been found only undeveloped and ambiguous in the CRWT.¹²¹ The most obvious of these elements are the principles of reasonable prospect of

¹²⁰ Wang, *Harmony and War*, 18-19.

¹²¹ Graff, “The Chinese Concept of Righteous War,” 196.

success and proportionality, which cannot be found in the traditional Chinese concept of righteous war. The principle of competent authority also appears ambiguous in comparison with its place in the Western tradition of just war, although Chinese thinkers pointed to the moral character of the ruler as a means of determining competent authority. Furthermore, the idea that war is the last resort does not clearly appear as one of the criteria for assessing the legitimacy of the use of force in the early Chinese concept of righteous war. Thus, while it is clear that there are some points of similarity with Western just war thought, the Chinese tradition merits attention in its own right.

The survey of the current literature and the ancient Chinese classics yields two major understandings of the influence of the CRWT upon China's decision to go to war. The first suggests that the CRWT serves as a moral cloak covering the Chinese decision to use force aggressively. This understanding is brought out by Waley, and echoed by Johnston and Graff.¹²² Arthur Waley points out that, even though the Confucians strongly emphasized the duty of the other states to punish any state which was being badly ruled, there was no inter-state court which could investigate charges against a government; therefore, "the righteous war principle became merely a moral cloak under which to cover acts of aggression." Waley further argues that the righteous war principle "was in fact a mechanism, familiar enough to-day, for bridging the gap between the amorality of those who actually handle the affairs of a state and the inconvenient idealism of the masses."¹²³ In other words, the critique of the "moral cloak," in Waley's term, sees decisions for war basically as resulting from amoral assessment, and the ideas in the CRWT work as a tool for reconciling amoral decisions with the philosophical principles used to educate the masses. This critique suggests that the justice of war has no, or very little, influence upon Chinese leaders when they are making the decision to go to war.

The second understanding, which I argue and will test in this research, suggests that the CRWT provides a frame of reference within which Chinese leaders conduct moral assessment of their decisions to go to war. This frame of reference helps China's leaders to assess the legitimacy of their decisions. When a decision is found to be legitimate, China's leaders are more likely to put the decision into action. This understanding, however, does not deny that amoral

¹²² Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, 104; Johnston, *Cultural Realism*, 252; and Graff, "The Chinese Concepts of Righteous War," 211.

¹²³ Arthur Waley, *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*, 104-105.

factors, such as national interests and capabilities, have played an important role in Chinese decision-making, but it does suggest that Chinese leaders would consider the issues of righteous causes and morality when making their decisions.

Furthermore, the CRWT may play a more important role when China's leaders have encountered an impasse in decision-making such as when different pragmatic arguments point toward opposite courses of action. One should not confuse this with the "moral cloak" argument. Fundamentally, the argument of "moral cloak" assumes that the CRWT helps Chinese to reconcile the conflict between an opportunity for amoral or pragmatic advantageous action and those of their cultural and philosophical paradigms that argue against such action. But resolving real ambivalence is different. In these cases, the CRWT helps Chinese to reinforce one course of action, such as a decision for war, when the pragmatic calculations point in two opposite directions. This does not mean that the Chinese decision is amoral or irrelevant to the considerations of the justice of war. Rather, the Chinese simultaneously engage in both pragmatic calculation and moral assessment while making decisions, and they are more willing to view the decision for war as legitimate when another path, apart from pragmatic calculation, also suggests going to war.

This argument also implies that the traditional Chinese concept of righteous war may have exerted influence when the Chinese leaders attempted to decide upon the use of large-scale force for an offensive operation outside Chinese territory or in a disputed area. In other words, the CRWT is expected to exert influence when the Chinese leaders are making a decision for war with an active deployment of force, where another justification for war cannot be clearly found. When the justification for war is obvious, the CRWT may have no visible influence upon Chinese decision making. One such circumstance might be a Chinese decision for self-defense against an invasion. This limitation results from the common-sense assumption that any aggression would automatically provide just cause to the state that is invaded, as well as trigger its action for self-defense. Thus, when the Chinese faced the danger of a superior opponent's massive invasion or nuclear attack, they would naturally see no need to invoke the CRWT in an effort to legitimize their action in self-defense.

This argument echoes Johnson and Tierney's Rubicon theory of war, which explains the shift of mind-sets in decision-making. Johnson and Tierney argue that when people believe they have crossed a psychological Rubicon, they switch from a "deliberative" to an "implemental"

mind-set, which can be a causal factor in the outbreak of war.¹²⁴ Johnson and Tierney suggest that the shift of mind-sets occurs when people perceive war as imminent.¹²⁵ I argue that the CRWT may also help the Chinese to shift mind-sets when they perceive war as imminent. Although the ancient Chinese classics do not include any passages specifically bearing on this problem, Huiyun Feng suggests that the Chinese concept of righteous war may have served as one of the final criteria for Chinese leaders to determine to use force when nonviolent efforts toward a solution had failed.¹²⁶ According to this argument, the CRWT thinking may well influence the shift of mind-sets when Chinese perceive that their attempts at nonviolent solutions have encountered deadlock. This leads to the following hypothesis:

The Chinese are prone to go to war only when such action is justified by the CRWT.

Research Design

A Chinese *decision to go to war* is the dependent variable. I use the levels of hostility of the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) dataset to locate China's final decision for dealing with a foreign crisis. The MID dataset defines five levels of hostility for states participating in an interstate dispute: no militarized action, threats of force, displays of force, uses of force, and war.¹²⁷ The operational definition of the level of war is "when militarized interstate disputes evolve, or escalate, to the point where military combat is sufficiently sustained that it will result in a minimum of 1,000 total battle deaths."¹²⁸

Chinese assessment of the legitimacy of the decision to go to war is the independent variable. Two major ideas of the CRWT may be applied by Chinese leaders to assess this legitimacy, which are *righteousness-based justification* and *judgment of morality*. Chinese

¹²⁴ Dominic D. P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, "The Rubicon Theory of War: How the Path to Conflict Reaches the Point of No Return," *International Security* 36, no. 1 (Summer 2011): 7.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹²⁶ Huiyun Feng, *Chinese Strategic Culture and Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, 26-27.

¹²⁷ The operational definitions of threats of force, displays of force, and uses of force please see the Appendix 1.

¹²⁸ Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer, "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1819-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 15, no. 2: 171. It means total battle deaths on both sides.

leaders' identifications of just causes and their opponents' moral standing are used as measures of how much they have applied the CRWT. In addition, reports in the Chinese media addressing the leaders' attitude toward the behavior of their opponents give a supplementary means for assessing how they determine morality.

The statements of key Chinese leaders and the biographies of them edited and released by government-controlled presses merit the highest priority for examination. Other high-ranking leaders' memoirs and recollections are also used to fill in those parts of decision-making which are not covered by the sources about the key leaders. The material in these types of sources must be treated with caution. For various reasons, such as ideological imperatives or the Chinese government's policy concerning publication by persons of especially high rank, the authors of these memoirs may exaggerate a story or simply transplant the official formulation into their recollection in order to glorify the image of the paramount leaders. For this reason, I have adopted only recollections of direct conversations with the key leaders and the records of events in which the authors were personally involved; and I will exclude any recollection about the key leaders' considerations coming from a third-person narrative.

The *People's Daily*, the most important official mouthpiece of the People's Republic of China (PRC), is the media source for retrieving the data showing China's public expression of the assessment of morality on its opponents. These data show how often there was use of words representing the kind of wrongdoing that the CRWT sees as especially worthy of punishment — the sort of language adopted by the Chinese to describe opponents' immorality. Those words, many of which are used in the ancient Chinese classics, include: violent (*cubao*, 粗暴; *hengbao*, 橫暴; *canbao*, 殘暴), outrageous (*manheng*, 蠻橫; *kuangwang*, 狂妄), savage (*changkuang*, 猖狂), crazy (*fengkuang*, 瘋狂), vicious (*e*, 惡; *edu*, 惡毒), unjustified/unreasonable (*wuli*, 無理), impudent (*wuchi*, 無恥), criminal (*zui*, 罪), and barbarian (*yeman*, 野蠻).¹²⁹ In order to measure the Chinese government's attitude more specifically rather than any broader group's opinion, not every type of material printed in the *People's Daily* is counted. Entries counted are limited to the editorials, key decision makers' speeches and statements, diplomatic messages, reports written by reporters of the *People's Daily*, supplemental information aimed at educating the Chinese public, and news commentary directly expressed by the *People's Daily*. Other entries were

¹²⁹ Later in this study, I will use "morality-based condemnation" to describe the use of those words.

excluded from my data collection – for example, reports originating from foreign news agencies, statements distributed by foreign states and reprinted in the *People's Daily*, and news about domestic protests against the behavior of China's opponents.¹³⁰

It would be unusual for a government involved in a militarized dispute to refrain from blaming its enemy for wrongdoings. Nonetheless, words can still be chosen consciously and carefully by a contending state to signal its standing and attitude in the dispute. The signal may be presented through the frequency of news items blaming the opponent's wrongdoings.¹³¹ Thus, the computed frequency presented here offers a traceable pattern, and it can be stated with confidence that a judgment of morality had been made by the Chinese. Moreover, if an increased frequency of criticisms appears in the traceable pattern, this may be congruent with a decision by China to go to war.

The analysis of China's use of morality-based language is a test of the argument that the CRWT functioned only as a "moral cloak." If this research finds that China's leaders did not express any concerns about just cause while making their decisions for war, but the frequency of morality-based condemnation increased after the critical points in decision making, then China's use of that language was likely to be for public consumption in order to justify the decision to go to war. Therefore, if the frequency of language used in the *People's Daily* is found to be consistent with the presentation of just cause behind the scenes, then the use of that language may be more than just a "moral cloak."

Two major methods are used to examine the relationship between the CRWT and China's decisions to go to war. First, I use a method similar to Przeworski and Teune's "most similar systems design," which compares the cases that are as similar as possible on a wide range of

¹³⁰ It is justifiable to exclude the news about Chinese domestic protest against the opponents' behavior. As will be presented later in this dissertation, Mao Zedong admitted to Edgar Snow in 1965 that gathering domestic rallies by the Chinese government was as habitually practiced as lip service supporting its allies. See *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan* (Selected Diplomatic Papers of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi, 1994), 557-562.

¹³¹ Counts of the frequency of the events, gathered from the media, can be employed in the study of politics. In this study, I adopt this method of analysis. The frequency with which the above-mentioned words appear, is used to measure the assessment of moral standing announced to the public through the media. See John T. Wooley, "Using Media-Based Data in Studies of Politics," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no. 1 (Jan., 2000): 156-173; and Steve Chen, "Chinese Conflict Calculus and Behavior: Assessment from a Perspective of Conflict Management," *World Politics* 30, no. 3 (April, 1978): 391-410.

explanatory/independent variables but different on the value of the dependent variable.¹³² The basic inferential logic of this design is, as Levy mentions, “to identify patterns of covariation and to eliminate independent variables that do not covary with the dependent variable.”¹³³ However, Levy further argued that this method may confront the difficulty of identifying cases that are truly comparable – “identical or different in all respects but one.”¹³⁴ This problem can often be eased by approaching longitudinal designs involving a single state over time.¹³⁵ Longitudinal design is also helpful to foster what King, Keohane, and Verba called “unit homogeneity,” which assumes that if the observations have the same value on the key explanatory variable, then we can expect that the dependent variables from each observation are also the same.¹³⁶

By adopting the method of “most similar systems” with a longitudinal design, I select six cases between 1950 and 1979 where the circumstances seemed ripe for the CRWT to influence decisions to go to war. The cases are the Korean War, the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis¹³⁷, the Sino-Indian War, the period of 1964-1965 in the Vietnam War¹³⁸, the Sino-Soviet Border Disputes, and the Sino-Vietnamese War. According to my argument, the CRWT is expected to exert influence on China’s decision to go to war under two circumstances: when China’s leaders have encountered an impasse in decision-making (such as when different pragmatic arguments point toward opposite courses of action), and when they perceive that their attempts at nonviolent solutions have encountered deadlock. I thus expect that these circumstances will be

¹³² Jack Levy, “Cases Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference,” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25, no 1 (2008): 10; and Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1970), 32-34.

¹³³ Jack Levy, “Cases Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference,” 10.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 91.

¹³⁷ The First Taiwan Strait Crisis is not selected because this crisis was simply a continuance of the Chinese Civil War of 1947-1949, in which the Chinese Communists attempted to resume their military action to unify the KMT-controlled territory that was suspended because of the Korean War.

¹³⁸ I select the years 1964 and 1965 in the Vietnam War, because those years were the key period when the Chinese government assessed the possibility of a direct Sino-American confrontation in Vietnam and eventually recognized that the possibility was low after a series of attempts at communication with the United States.

present¹³⁹ during the Korean War, the Sino-Indian War, and the Sino-Vietnamese War.¹⁴⁰ They should not be present during the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis¹⁴¹, the period of 1964-1965 in the Vietnam War¹⁴², and the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute.¹⁴³

Process-tracing is the second method I employ to test my hypothesis regarding the influence of the CRWT. Collier defines this method as “an analytic tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from diagnostic pieces of evidence – often understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena.”¹⁴⁴ George and Bennett point out that the process-tracing method attempts to identify the intervening causal process between an independent variable (or variables) and the outcome of the dependent variable.¹⁴⁵ By investigating evidence of each step and providing a detailed narrative, process-tracing can help researchers to explore the chain of events and the decision-making process.¹⁴⁶ My argument about the application of the CRWT is relevant to the reinforcement of confidence in decisions for war and the timing of shifts in the mind-sets of Chinese leaders. Thus, this method can allow me to give close attention to tracing when the Chinese leaders apply the CRWT and how its ideas influence the outcome of decision making.

¹³⁹ This assumption follows one of the theoretical implications of the most similar systems that “the factors that are common to the countries are irrelevant in determining the behavior being explained since different patterns of behavior are observed among systems sharing these factors.” Quoted in Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, 34.

¹⁴⁰ According to the MID dataset, the level of hostility at which China acted in these wars is given as the level of war. See MID dataset: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/COW2%20Data/MIDs/MID310.html#data>.

¹⁴¹ The MID coded China’s level of hostility in this case as the level of “uses of force.”

¹⁴² In this case, China’s act is coded as the level of “threats of force” by the MID dataset

¹⁴³ The MID dataset coded China’s act in this conflict at the level of “uses of force.”

¹⁴⁴ David Collier, “Understanding Process Tracing,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44, no. 4 (2011): 824.

¹⁴⁵ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 2004), 206.

¹⁴⁶ Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997), 64.

Chapter 3 - The Korean War

In the last two decades, many valuable studies of China's decision to intervene in the Korean War have become available. Some argue that the Chinese Communist Party's "revolutionary nationalism, its sense of responsibility toward an Asian-wide or worldwide revolution, and its determination to maintain the inner dynamic of the Chinese revolution"¹⁴⁷ influenced its leaders' decision to intervene in the Korean War. Some argue that the interplay of military romanticism and pragmatism shaped CCP attitude, thinking, and behavior regarding the use of force in Korea.¹⁴⁸ Some believe that Mao's calculations concerning security led him to choose to dispatch troops in Korea.¹⁴⁹ These arguments are persuasive, and I have no intention to refute them since the motives that drove China's leaders to intervene in the Korean War by force were complex and varied. For the purpose of this study, I trace the statements and remarks made by top Chinese leaders (Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Peng Dehuai) regarding the legitimacy of intervention to examine whether their considerations were similar to what the CRWT would suggest. My application of the concept of righteous war will be focused. As the following examination will show, righteous causes for the decision to go to war not only had been considered by the key Chinese leaders, but they also persuaded them that going to war was the right decision and should be put into action rather than avoiding involvement. In addition, analysis of the *People's Daily* shows how the Chinese government presented its case for righteous cause.

¹⁴⁷ Chen Jian, *China's Road to the Korean War: The Making of the Sino-American Confrontation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 213-214.

¹⁴⁸ Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao's Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, Kansas: The University Press of Kansas, 1995), 11.

¹⁴⁹ See, Jonathan D. Pollack, *Into the Vortex: China, the Sino-Soviet Alliance, and the Korean War* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1990); Thomas Christensen, "Threats, Assurance, and the Last Chance for Peace: The Lesson of Mao's Korean War Telegrams," *International Security* 17 (Summer 1992): 122-54; and Michael H. Hunt, "Beijing and the Korean Crisis, June 1950 – June 1951," *Political Science Quarterly* 107 (Fall 1992): 453-78.

Historical Background

After receiving the green light from Stalin¹⁵⁰, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) crossed the 38th parallel on June 25, 1950, to "reunify" Korea. The NKPA's invasion caused the United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, to advise President Truman to intervene in the crisis by force and dispatch the 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait.¹⁵¹ Truman immediately approved Acheson's suggestion and informed General MacArthur of that decision. At the same time, the U.N. approved the U.S.-proposed resolution to intervene in the Korean conflict with military force.¹⁵² Although the situation in East Asia changed quickly after the NKPA's invasion, Beijing didn't have a clear response until three days later when Zhou Enlai protested the presence of the U.S. 7th Fleet in the Taiwan Strait.¹⁵³ The 7th Fleet's patrol of the Taiwan Strait significantly interfered with and altered Beijing's intention of "liberating" Taiwan. The huge obstruction imposed by the 7th Fleet in the Taiwan Strait eventually forced Beijing to postpone its plan to "liberate" Taiwan.

Although the NKPA's victory seemed imminent with its quick success after crossing the 38th parallel, Beijing started to worry about the possibility of a U.S. amphibious operation against the NKPA's lines of communication.¹⁵⁴ On July 2, Zhou mentioned to the Soviet Ambassador to the PRC that, if the Americans crossed the 38th parallel, Beijing could dispatch troops to Korea to support the NKPA against the American forces. For this reason, Zhou said, Beijing would initially concentrate three corps in northeastern China as a reserve for a rainy day.¹⁵⁵ On July 7, based on Mao's instruction, the Central Military Committee (CMC) approved the order to organize the Northeast Border Defense Army (NBDA).¹⁵⁶ On July 13, Mao formally approved

¹⁵⁰ John Lewis Gaddis, *Now We Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1997), 71-72.

¹⁵¹ Allen Reed Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951: they came from the north* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 115.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 113-114.

¹⁵³ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China (1950)* (Beijing, China: Contemporary China Publishing House, 2006), 454-456

¹⁵⁴ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou: Lei Yingfu jiang ju hui yi lu* (General Lei Yingfu's Memoir) (Nanchang, China: Baihuazhou wenyi chubanshe, 1997), 146-150

¹⁵⁵ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China (1950)*, 479

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 490

the decision to protect the Northeast border, which confirmed the organization and preparation of the NBDA.¹⁵⁷

While the level of the U.S. intervention was increasing, Mao revealed his concern about the possibility of a reverse in the strategic situation in Korea in a Politburo meeting of August 4. He mentioned that if the Americans won the war, then they would further threaten China; therefore, there was a need to help North Korea. Mao believed that China should send a force with the name of “volunteer army” at the right time.¹⁵⁸ The next day, Mao ordered the NBDA to complete all preparation by the end of August. But Mao quickly extended the time for preparation at the request of the frontier units.¹⁵⁹ Meanwhile, Mao and Zhou Enlai received a report from the Central Military Commission (CMC) estimating the possibility and location of the U.S. counterstrike. In this report, Inchon was considered the location most likely for the U.S. counterstrike.¹⁶⁰ Based on this report, Mao and Zhou decided that the NBDA would complete its preparations for war and be ready to dispatch by September 30, and they informed the Soviets of their decision.¹⁶¹

In late August, when the Americans launched a strategic bombing campaign along the Yalu River, China’s leaders felt more and more uneasy about the U.S. conduct of the Korean War. Zhou dispatched several telegrams to the U.N. Secretary General, Trygve Lie, and the U.S. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, condemning the U.S. strategic bombing on the Yalu River as an improper intrusion into Chinese territory.¹⁶² On September 5, Mao recognized that the Korean War would very likely become a prolonged war because of the U.S. intervention. He was concerned that the U.S. could expand its aggression to China if it won the war; thus, China had to prepare for dealing with any possible scenario that developed on the Korean battlefield.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 496

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 571

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 602

¹⁶⁰ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 146-152

¹⁶¹ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People’s Republic of China (1950)*, 614.

¹⁶² *Jianguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao* (Zhou Enlai’s Manuscripts since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2008), vol. 3: 216-225.

¹⁶³ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People’s Republic of China (1950)*, 650.

Beijing's worries about a U.S. counterstrike which would reverse the situation in the war finally became reality when General MacArthur launched the Inchon landing on September 15, 1950.

Not until September 18 did Beijing learn that the Americans were landing at Inchon and winning the battle. Zhou immediately summoned the Soviet Ambassador to Beijing to discuss the next step for dealing with the situation after the Inchon landing. Zhou believed that the North Koreans needed to withdraw all their major forces from the front as quickly as possible if they did not have enough reserve troops to protect the rear area.¹⁶⁴ On September 20, with Mao's approval, Zhou telegraphed Kim that the NKPA should strive to keep the 38th parallel in its hands in order to engage in a prolonged war.¹⁶⁵ Beijing's suggestion was too optimistic regarding the NKPA's ability to control the collapsing situation. On September 28, the key leaders of the Worker's Party of Korea (WPK) realized that the NKPA could no longer prevent the Americans from crossing the 38th parallel and could not even offer an effective resistance against the advance of US/UN troops both toward and within North Korea. Because of this situation, the North Koreans had no choice but to ask the Soviet Union and the PRC for help.¹⁶⁶ The next day, after measuring the situation, Mao authorized Zhou to deliver an official speech supporting the North Koreans, stating that "the Chinese people enthusiastically love peace, but in order to defend peace, they never have been and never will be afraid to oppose aggressive war" and "the Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, not [sic] will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by the imperialists."¹⁶⁷

After receiving the WPK's call for help, Stalin on September 30 asked Beijing to dispatch at least five or six divisions under the cover of volunteer troops to the Korean peninsula for helping the NKPA to reconstitute its strength. Moscow also informed the WPK about its request to Beijing and the Soviet attitude toward the assistance. That night, Kim sent Park Il-woo to Beijing to ask the Chinese to provide help.¹⁶⁸ On October 2, two days after receiving Stalin's request,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 685.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 690.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 707.

¹⁶⁷ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China (1950)*, 710; and Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993), 273-274,

¹⁶⁸ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China (1950)*, 724

Mao summoned an emergency meeting to discuss China's response. Although Mao and Zhou tended to favor complying with Stalin's request to send troops into Korea, the majority of participants opposed a decision to enter the war. Because of those objections, Mao decided to postpone the delivery of his telegram informing Stalin that Beijing was ready to send forces. Due to the dissent, those present at the meeting agreed to summon an enlarged Politburo meeting on October 4 to discuss thoroughly the decision to use Chinese forces in Korea. After the October 2 meeting, Beijing dispatched a telegram to Stalin stating that the Chinese would not send troops until the time was right.¹⁶⁹ Meanwhile, Beijing's efforts to stop the U.S. from crossing the 38th parallel had not ceased. On October 3, Zhou attempted to warn Washington through the Indian Ambassador to Beijing that China would intervene in the war if the U.S. crossed the 38th parallel.¹⁷⁰

On October 4, the enlarged Politburo meeting¹⁷¹ took place. The majority still expressed reservations about the decision to enter the war. After hearing their reasons, Mao commented that the Chinese would "feel terrible" if they were standing on the side and watching the North Koreans endure a national crisis.¹⁷² This remark eventually won support from Peng Dehuai, who had entered the convention hall in the middle of the dispute and didn't express an opinion during the meeting, after he thought about it that night.¹⁷³ In the next day's meeting, Peng supported Mao, who was encouraged enough to stick to his earlier decision to intervene in Korea. Finally, at the end of the October 5 meeting, the Politburo approved Mao's decision to dispatch troops to Korea for the purpose of saving North Korea from ruin.¹⁷⁴

While the CCP Politburo was making its decision to enter the war, Stalin was confused by Beijing's earlier telegram that China would temporarily refrain from dispatching troops. Stalin

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 730-731

¹⁷⁰ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 179; and *Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan* (Selected Diplomatic Papers of Zhou Enlai) (Beijing, China: Zhongyang wenxian, 1990), 25-27.

¹⁷¹ During the Mao era, an "enlarged Politburo meeting" meant a Politburo meeting that the Chairman had expanded by inviting some non-Politburo members to attend.

¹⁷² Xiaobing Li, Allan R. Millet, and Bin Yu, trans. and eds., *Mao's Generals Remember Korea* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 31-32; Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 180; and Peng Dehuai, *Peng Dehuai zishu* (Peng Dehuai's Memoir) (Beijing: Jiefangjun wenyi chubanshe, 2002), 266-267.

¹⁷³ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 180; and Peng Dehuai, *Peng Dehuai Zishu*, 266-267.

¹⁷⁴ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China (1950)*, 742.

clarified the Soviet standpoint by asking Beijing to dispatch troops to Korea in reply to the Chinese telegram of October 2. On October 7, Mao replied to Stalin, explaining that China would send nine divisions but not at once. Mao also asked Stalin to receive Mao's envoy to discuss China's plans and the Soviets' military aid to the Chinese in the Chinese effort to support North Korea.¹⁷⁵ The next day, Mao issued the directive creating the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) and informed Kim about Beijing's decision to enter the war.¹⁷⁶

Zhou Enlai and Lin Biao, as the envoys sent from Beijing, met Stalin on October 11 to discuss the issue of Soviet military aid to China and its volunteers. Although Beijing had already resolved to enter the war, Zhou decided to conceal it from Stalin in order to bargain for more favorable military assistance. Zhou attempted to persuade Stalin that the Chinese would enter the war only if the Soviets could offer the military supplies and equipment the Chinese needed for the war and dispatch air forces to cover the Chinese volunteers in Korea. However, contrary to Zhou's expectation that the Soviet Union should do more, Stalin only agreed to offer materiel; the Soviet air force, he said, would not be ready for action until two or two and half months later.¹⁷⁷

Zhou's message about Stalin's decision presented Mao with a serious dilemma – whether to delay the CPV's entry into the war.¹⁷⁸ Mao cabled Peng, Gao Gang¹⁷⁹, and other generals of the CPV to temporarily cease military actions until there had been another thorough discussion in the Politburo.¹⁸⁰ On October 13, the Politburo held another meeting to discuss the issue of entry into the war without Soviet air cover. Mao asked Peng for his assessment of the feasibility of fighting against the U.S. without Soviet air cover. Peng said that it could be done with some success. Finally, the meeting ended with a conclusion to maintain the original plan for sending the CPV into Korea, even without any immediate air cover provided by the Soviets. That evening, Mao

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 748.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 752; and *Jiangguo yilai MaoZedong wengao* (Mao Zedong's Manuscripts since the Founding of the People's Republic of China) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1987-97), vol. 1: 543-544.

¹⁷⁷ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China* (1950), 760-61.

¹⁷⁸ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 191-192.

¹⁷⁹ Peng Dehuai had been designated as the commander of the CPV, with Gao Gang as political commissar.

¹⁸⁰ The Institute of Contemporary China Studies, *The Annals of the People's Republic of China* (1950), 762-63; and *Jiangguo yilai MaoZedong wengao*, vol. 1: 552.

telegraphed Zhou the Politburo's final decision, stating that "the entry of our army into Korea continues to be to our advantage."¹⁸¹ At a Politburo meeting on October 18, after three days of detailed discussion and after receiving Zhou's message from Moscow, Mao made his final decision that the CPV's plan to cross the river would not be changed or postponed. At 19:00, October 19, 1950, the CPV secretly began crossing the Yalu River, and the PRC threw itself into another war that would last for the next three years.

Analysis of the Leaders

Mao Zedong

Mao was the most important person in the decision to dispatch troops to help the North Koreans. As mentioned earlier, in mid-July Mao realized that the PRC needed to prepare as early as possible for any outcome of the Korean War. When the NKPA offensive was checked in the Pusan area in August, Mao started to believe that an enlarged and prolonged war might be possible. Under this circumstance, Mao considered the next step for Beijing. On August 4, he said:

If the American imperialists win, [then they] will pride [themselves in this victory], and will threaten us. For North Korea we cannot but help, [we] have to help, in the style of volunteer troops, and of course we need to choose the right time. We must have preparation.¹⁸²

Mao didn't specify the right time to offer help until September 23, after the Americans successfully landed at Inchon. Mao mentioned that "if the American imperialists want to intervene [in the conflict] but not to cross the 38th parallel, we will not intervene [in the conflict]; if they cross the 38th parallel, we will certainly go over there [Korea] to fight."¹⁸³ These two comments show that Mao had recognized that China might need to use force to deal with the situation. Clearly, from Mao's words, the Chinese did not want to see the U.S. expand the war into North Korean territory. This unwanted development was the Chinese bottom line for intervening in Korea. At this stage, however, we cannot determine whether this consideration

¹⁸¹ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 194 and 281; and *Jiangguo yilai MaoZedong wengao*, vol. 1: 556

¹⁸² Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976* (A Biography of Mao Zedong, 1949-1976) (Beijing, China: Zhongyang Wenxian Chubanshe, 2003), 109

¹⁸³ Ibid.

resulted from the ideas of the CRWT or pragmatic calculation since both have the potential to explain Mao's position. The justification Mao used is compatible with the idea of helping a weak state against a strong state's invasion in the CRWT. It is also compatible with pragmatic calculation. Mere compatibility is not enough to validate the influence of the CRWT. Thus, it is important to know what justifications Mao used, and how he used them, when he perceived the right time to go to war between October 1 and 18, 1950.

The first critical moment during that period was the emergency meeting of October 2. A day before the meeting, Beijing had received an intelligence report indicating that the US/UN vanguard units had begun crossing the 38th parallel.¹⁸⁴ On the night of October 1, Kim Il-Sung delivered an urgent request to China's ambassador to Pyongyang appealing to Beijing to send forces into Korea. This situation made Mao believe that it was time for China to dispatch its forces. Mao had even drafted a telegram that was supposed to be sent to Stalin after the October 2 meeting. But that telegram was postponed and eventually cancelled because of the discordant opinions expressed in the meeting of October 2.¹⁸⁵ Although the telegram never accomplished its purpose of delivering Mao's explanation of China's response, it did reflect Mao's initial motives for entering the Korean War. In that telegram, Mao stated:

1. We have decided to send some of our troops to Korea under the name of [Chinese People's] Volunteers to fight the United States and its lackey Syngman Rhee and to aid our Korean comrades. From the following considerations, we think it necessary to do so: if the Americans occupy the whole of Korea, the Korean revolutionary force will meet with a fundamental defeat and the American aggressors will [behave even] more rampantly. This will be unfavorable to the entire East.¹⁸⁶

The justifications Mao adopted in this telegram, however, did not reveal a strong moral component. Although Mao did worry that the North Koreans would meet a fundamental defeat from the Americans' invasion, he justified Beijing's use of force as a protection of the communists' revolution in Korea and the entire East rather than as a righteous act to help save the weak neighbor from invasion. This lack of righteousness-based justification does not necessarily mean that Mao was making his decision without thinking about the issues of righteous war. The role of the receiver of that telegram, Stalin, as the leader of the communist

¹⁸⁴ Zhang Shu Guang, *Mao's Military Romanticism*, 77.

¹⁸⁵ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 118.

¹⁸⁶ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 1: 539.

bloc, explains that it was wise for Mao to emphasize the justification from an internationalist viewpoint rather than from a distinctively Chinese perspective. Mao's statements during the next critical period show that the ideas of the CRWT played an important role in Mao's justification of the use of force, especially when speaking to his fellow Politburo members.

The second critical moment to observe in Mao's decision making is between October 4 and 6, 1950, when the Politburo debated his decision. Because the October 2 meeting could not achieve any agreement, Mao decided to convene an enlarged Politburo meeting on October 4 and 5. In the October 4 meeting, Mao let the participants express their own opinions about the use of force in Korea before he shared his opinion. After hearing all of the arguments pro and con, according to Peng Dehuai's recollection, Mao said: "All that you said sounds reasonable and logical. When we, however, are standing on the side, just watching other people who are undergoing a national crisis, we still feel terrible inside no matter what we pretend."¹⁸⁷ This wording not only moved Peng to steadfastly support Mao's decision, but also revealed an idea similar to the CRWT. Mao's expression suggests that he regarded Chinese inaction when a neighbor was in peril as improper behavior. As the expression showed, Mao had a frame of reference for identifying the right thing for China to do in dealing with the deteriorating situation in North Korea. It should be noted that Mao was making this remark in a closed-door meeting with high-ranking leaders, who must have been skillful at, or at least knowledgeable about, the use of propaganda. Although we cannot exactly know what those participants had in mind, the circumstances of the meeting might well have encouraged them to express the option that they believed to be the best decision for China in response to the conflict in Korea. Moreover, Mao's expression suggests that the ideas of the CRWT, in Mao's view, were also a useful tool that could bring the dissenters to think again about what would be the morally right thing for China to do in response to the developments in Korea. In this regard, the ideas of the CRWT, to Mao, were certainly not naïve thinking, and might have been a sort of common sense for those Chinese leaders assessing the decision for war; otherwise, Mao would hardly have wasted time persuading his comrades by emphasizing just cause.

¹⁸⁷ Xiaobing Li, Allan R. Millet, and Bin Yu, trans. and eds., *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, 32; and Peng Dehuai, *Peng Dehuai zishu*, 267

Mao's voice highlighting the righteousness of helping North Korea against the U.S. invasion reached its peak on the night of October 6, when he heard the reasons that Lin Biao had given for opposing the decision to go to war at a CMC meeting earlier that day. According to Lei Yingfu's memoir¹⁸⁸, during that CMC meeting in which Mao did not participate, Lin Biao continued to question the decision to dispatch troops. Right after the meeting, Lei Yingfu and Zhou Enlai ran into Mao at Zhongnanhai. Mao inquired about what had transpired. Zhou reported to Mao that Lin Biao was still reluctant to support the decision to enter the war. Apparently annoyed with Lin Biao's formulations, Mao replied:

He [Lin Biao] has one thousand reasons, ten thousand reasons, [but he] cannot confute only one reason of ours, that is both we and North Korea are friendly socialist neighbors under the leadership of Communism. The teeth are cold when the lips are lost.¹⁸⁹ No matter from the viewpoint of internationalism, or patriotism, we cannot see someone in mortal danger without lifting a finger to save him. The Chinese people have a glorious tradition and [doctrine of] virtue for thousands of years, that is, *never to hesitate to do what is righteous* (見義勇為), and *to sacrifice ourselves to save others* (捨己救人); we ought to carry them forward.¹⁹⁰

In this comment, Mao clearly pointed out the principles he believed to be the guidelines for Chinese behavior when a neighbor was in danger.¹⁹¹ He used two traditional Chinese idioms, “never to hesitate to do what is righteous” and “to sacrifice ourselves to save others,” to justify his decision. The use of these two idioms suggests that the calculation of China's interests was not the consideration dominating Mao's assessment of the decision for going to war. A concern

¹⁸⁸ Lei Yingfu was Zhou Enlai's secretary in charge of military affairs in 1950.

¹⁸⁹ This metaphor originated from an event recorded in *Zuo Zhuan*. In 655 BCE, the ruler of Jin (晉) wanted to attack Guo (虢), which was not adjacent to Jin, by going through from Yu (虞), a state lying between between Jin and Guo. The ruler of Yu was persuaded by Jin to allow it. One of his ministers, Gong Zhiqi (宮之奇), warned the ruler of Yu that letting Jin pass through Yu would be a mistake, and Jin would annex Yu on its way back from the invasion of Guo. In his warnings, Gong Zhiqi used the metaphor -- “the cheekbones and the jaws are mutually dependent (*fu che xiang yi*, 輔車相依)” and “the teeth are cold when the lips are lost (*chun wang chi han*, 唇亡齒寒),” to describe the relationship between Yu and Guo. See Yu Xianhao, Zhou Fuchang and Yao Manbo, ann., *Zuo Zhuan*, 302-303.

¹⁹⁰ Italics added. Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 157-158.

¹⁹¹ It is possible that Lei might exaggerate Mao's antipathy to Lin Biao and play up the Chairman's righteous image for reasons of political correctness. But the context of this comment can still be regarded as valid since the logic presented in this comment is consistent with Mao's previous statements on October 4.

for righteousness also appeared. To Mao, China's decision for war to help the North Koreans was not only legitimized, but also a virtuous act that should be glorified.

Moreover, Mao's invocation of righteousness between October 4 and 6 to defend his decisions implies that the concept of righteous war not only helped him to legitimize his decision for war; it also reinforced his determination when dissent arose. This also suggests that the concept of righteous war played a role in the shift of Mao's mind-set during early October of 1950. The suspension of delivery of the telegram dated October 2 indicates that Mao had not been fully ready to decide on entering the war; otherwise he might have resolutely persuaded his comrades, as he did later on October 4 and 6, and informed Stalin about China's decision. Between October 4 and 6, Mao's comments reveal that he had basically made up his mind to go to war. Mao's defense of his decision meanwhile indicates that his conviction about the right thing for China to do not only appeared precisely when the shift occurred, but persisted when it was challenged by the dissent.

Regarding the concept of righteous war as the key element in the shift of Mao's mind-sets also explains the variation in Mao's remarks after October 6. Johnson and Tierney argue that actors in an "implement mind-set" will focus intensely on getting the task done and resist reconsidering decisions they have already made or contemplating other courses of action.¹⁹² This inference is suggested by Mao's statements after October 6, which focused more on the task itself, rather than highlighting the identification of righteous causes. For example, on October 8, Mao did not refer to the righteousness-based justifications for the Chinese to enter the war in his directive "Creating the Chinese People's Volunteers" in which the invocation of righteousness and legitimacy might have helped to invigorate the Chinese troops' morale. He wrote:

In order to support the Korean people's war of liberation and to resist the attacks of the American imperialists and their running dogs, [and] for safeguarding the interest of the people of Korea, China, and all the other countries in the East, I herewith order the Northeast Frontier Force [to] change [its name] to the Chinese People's Volunteers, and order the Chinese People's Volunteers to march speedily to Korea and join in the Korean comrades' fight against the aggressors [for] winning a glorious victory.¹⁹³

Although Mao mentioned the purpose of helping North Korea to resist the attacks of the U.S. and its allies in this directive, his tone in the whole text was very similar to the earlier statement

¹⁹² Johnson and Tierney, "The Rubicon Theory of War," 14.

¹⁹³ *Jiangguo yilai MaoZedong wengao*, vol. 1: 543-544.

addressed to Stalin. On the same day, Mao's telegraph to Kim Il-sung informing him of Beijing's decision was also flatly worded, especially when he referred to the reason for entering the war: "according to the current situation, we have decided to dispatch the Volunteers to Korea to help you to fight against aggressors."¹⁹⁴

Similarly, on October 13, when Mao telegraphed Zhou to explain Beijing's final decision after acknowledging the Soviets' reluctance to offer immediate air support, he adopted a more pragmatic turn of expression. He wrote:

1. After a discussion with the comrades on the Politburo, we have reached a consensus that [to] keep our army entering into Korea [will] still [be to] our advantage...2. The adoption of our active policy mentioned above is extremely favorable to China, Korea, the East, and the world. If we do not send troops [to Korea], the reactionaries at home and abroad will be swollen with arrogance, when the enemy troops move forward to the bank of the Yalu River. Consequently, [this situation will bring] disadvantages to all [areas of our] side. The first [area will be] Northeast China [which will receive] more disadvantages, [because] the entire Northeast Frontier Force will be tied down and the electric power in South Manchuria will be constrained. In short, we believe that we should enter the war. We must enter the war. Entering the war is greatly to our advantage; it is greatly to our disadvantage if we do not enter the war.¹⁹⁵

This telegram indicates that the consideration of national security, especially the security of Northeast China, was a major motivation leading Mao to decide to continue the earlier decision after learning of the unfavorable response from the Soviets.

Therefore, by taking the Rubicon Theory of War into account, the lack of Mao's identification of righteous causes after October 6 should not refute my assumption of the influence of the CRWT. Instead, Mao's activities between October 2 and October 13 suggest that the identification of righteous cause may have played an important role in legitimating the decision and helping to shift his mind-set from the "deliberative" mode to the "implemental."

With regard to the identification of U.S. moral standing, however, Mao did not express a strong position, such as by judging the U.S. to be an immoral regime needing to be punished. According to Shen Zhi-hua, a Chinese expert on PRC foreign policy in the Cold War, Mao's perception of the U.S. suffered a significant impact when Truman announced his new policy toward Taiwan and sent the 7th Fleet to the Taiwan Strait. To Mao, these responses of the U.S. after the outbreak of Korean War not only manifested that the U.S. regarded the P.R.C. rather

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 545.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 556.

than North Korea as its major opponent in the conflict, but also meant that the U.S. had broken its commitment not to intervene in the internal affairs of China.¹⁹⁶ Mao was very dissatisfied with the Americans' new policy toward the Strait. On June 28, Mao expressed his resentment:

The Chinese people have long ago declared that the affairs of all countries of the entire world should be managed by their own people and not by the United States. The U.S. invasion of Asia can only touch off a broad and resolute opposition of Asian people. On January 5, Truman announced that the United States would not intervene in Taiwan. Now his conduct proves that what he said was false, and at the same time, he shredded all international agreements related to the American commitment not to intervene in China's internal affairs. The United States thus reveals its true color [of being] imperialist...The U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Korea, the Philippines, and Vietnam is totally unreasonable. The sympathies of the Chinese people and the people of the world belong to the countries which have been invaded, and [those sympathies] will never belong to the side of American imperialists...¹⁹⁷

As Shen Zhi-hua has argued, in Mao's view, Truman's statement of June 27 not only obstructed Beijing's plan to recover Taiwan by force but also deprived Beijing of the legitimacy to be gained from unifying Taiwan with the mainland both politically and legally.¹⁹⁸ This speech reveals an attempt to strike back at the Americans' new policy toward Taiwan by denouncing the aggressive nature of the U.S., but it falls far short of a full-blown moral denunciation.

After his speech of June 28, Mao showed no more resentment in any of his assessments and comments on the U.S. between July and September. At the Politburo meeting of September 5, when he assessed the advantages and disadvantages the U.S. possessed, Mao said:

The American imperialists have many difficulties today, which are internal disagreement and discord with other states. They only have an advantage in military affairs...but with three additional weaknesses....The three weaknesses are: first, the front line is too long...second, the line of communication is too far...third, the fighting power is too feeble....The enemy [the U.S.] is not dreadful, its posturing and aggressive stance is bluff. But the American imperialists may act recklessly today, it is capable of all sorts of things. If it acts in such a way, we will have a hard time [if] without preparation, [but] we will cope with it easily with preparation. What I call "act such a way" is nothing but to fight World War III, and fight with nuclear bombs, for a long period....¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁶ Shen Zhi-hua, *Mao Zedong, sidalin yu chaoxianzhanzheng* (Mao Zedong, Stalin, and the Korean War) (Guangdong, China: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2003), 343-344.

¹⁹⁷ *Jianguo yilai MaoZedong wengao*, vol. 1: 423.

¹⁹⁸ Shen Zhi-hua, *Mao Zedong, sidalin yu chaoxianzhanzheng*, 344

¹⁹⁹ *Mao Zedong wenji* (A Collection of Mao Zedong's Works) (Beijing: Renmin, 1993-1997), vol. 6: 92-94.

Although Mao's evaluation of the U.S. weaknesses was founded partly on his own wishful thinking, the ground of it is pragmatic and based on the objectives he recognized. These statements indicate that Mao had not clearly identified the moral status of the U.S. before the critical period of decision-making, even though he was still dissatisfied with the U.S. policy toward Taiwan.

Mao's use of negative terms, especially the words "aggressor" and "aggressive," in condemning the U.S. behavior in Korea, reappeared when the NKPA was collapsing after the Inchon landing. On September 30, Mao instructed Zhou to publicize his report to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), which warned the U.S. not to cross the 38th parallel. Zhou's announcement stated that "the Chinese people will absolutely not tolerate any foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors *being invaded savagely by the imperialists.*"²⁰⁰ In his draft telegram of October 2 to Stalin, Mao mentioned: "If the Americans occupy the whole of Korea, the Korean revolutionary force will meet with a fundamental defeat and the American aggressors will [behave even] more rampantly." The use of "aggressor" when describing the U.S. also appeared in Mao's directive creating the CPV on October 8, as well as in the telegram informing Kim Il-sung of Beijing's decision to enter the war, but it faded out after that.²⁰¹

Although Mao did not use morality-based condemnation to describe the moral standing of the U.S., the timing of his description of the U.S. as "aggressor" and "aggressive" is congruent with his highlighting of righteous causes. Uses of the words "aggressor" and "aggressive" were concentrated between September 30 and October 8, while the identification of righteous causes appeared especially between October 4 and 6, 1950. This congruence suggests that the moral inferiority of the U.S., which Mao branded as the "aggressor," was used to strengthen the righteous legitimacy of his decision to help the North Koreans fight against the U.S. invasion, especially when he had to persuade his wavering comrades to go along with him.

²⁰⁰ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 111. Italics added.

²⁰¹ Please see for example: Telegram, Mao to Peng Dehuai and the 13th Army Corps Command, October 21, 1950; Telegram, Mao to Peng and Deng Hua, October 22, 1950; and Telegram, Mao to Peng and Gao Gang, October 23, 1950 in *Jiangguo yilai MaoZedong wengao*, vol. 1: 575-76, 582-83, and 588-89.

Zhou Enlai

Zhou Enlai, the Premier of the PRC, is another key leader to be examined. As early as the beginning of August, Zhou had begun to consider the option of providing military assistance to North Korea. On August 4, Zhou made a speech in a Politburo meeting that brought up his assessment of possible developments in the Korean War. He mentioned:

If the American imperialists suppress North Korea, then [this result] will bring disadvantages to the peace and [the American imperialists] will swell with arrogance. In order to strive for victory, it must add China as a factor. After adding the factor of China, it may cause a change internationally. We have to have such a broad and long-range plan.²⁰²

Obviously, Zhou was clear about the power of the U.S. and its effect upon the ongoing Korean War. Zhou was not entirely pessimistic. His speech shows his confidence in the power of the PRC, which might offer considerable help to North Korea if the conflict took a turn for the worse.

Although Zhou had implied the possibility of Beijing's intervention, his intention to dispatch troops to Korea did not become clear until August 26 when he participated in a meeting discussing the preparations of the NBDA. At the meeting, Zhou indicated:

For our attitude toward the Korean [problem], we shall not only treat it as an issue of brotherhood, not only treat it as an issue linking with the vital interest of our northeast, but also need to regard it as an important issue of international struggle....If North Korea may achieve victory, our problem in [the issue of] Taiwan will be easily solved. Thus, what we adopt to [deal with] the Korean problem is an active attitude, that we will organize the Northeast Border Defense Army.²⁰³

In the same meeting, Zhou mentioned that, "according to the organization ordered by the CMC, a corps has more than 35,000 personnel, which [organization] is suitable for the operations in Korea."²⁰⁴ This formulation witnesses that at least by late August of 1950, Zhou had regarded the use of force in Korea as an applicable option for dealing with the worst-case scenario occurring on the Korean battlefield.

Zhou didn't publicize that thought until the U.S./U.N. troops were about to cross the 38th parallel on September 30. In this announcement, Zhou warned the U.S.:

²⁰² Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976* (A biography of Zhou Enlai, 1949-1976) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), 1011.

²⁰³ *Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan* (Selected Military Papers of Zhou Enlai) (Beijing: Renmin, 1997) vol. 4: 45.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

The Chinese people have been closely following the situation in Korea since she was invaded by the U.S.A. The Korean people and their People's Army are resolute and valorous. Led by Premier Kim Il Sung, they have scored remarkable achievements in resisting the American invaders and have won the sympathy and support of people throughout the world...The Chinese people are peace-loving people....The Chinese people enthusiastically love peace, but in order to defend peace, they never have been and never will be afraid to oppose aggressive war. The Chinese people absolutely will not tolerate foreign aggression, nor will they supinely tolerate seeing their neighbors being savagely invaded by the imperialists.²⁰⁵

This announcement clearly defined Zhou's justification of Beijing's use of force in Korea, which was aimed to help its neighbor fight against foreign aggression.

After receiving indefinite intelligence reporting that American and South Korean troops were crossing the 38th parallel on October 3, Zhou delivered another warning with a much clearer message through K. M. Panikkar, India's Ambassador to Beijing. Zhou stated:

U.S. troops are going to cross the 38th parallel in an attempt to extend the war. If the U.S. troops really do so, we cannot sit by idly and remain indifferent. We will intervene.²⁰⁶

To resolve the conflict in Korea, Zhou said, Beijing favored peaceful negotiation and the localization of the Korean War, which meant a withdrawal of all foreign forces from Korea. Panikkar knew that Beijing's proposal, which localized the Korean War by requesting the U.S./U.N. troops to withdraw, would be difficult for Washington to accept. Panikkar then inquired if there was any alternative proposal acceptable to Beijing, but Zhou replied by repeating his assertion that Beijing would intervene in the Korean War if the U.S. crossed the 38th parallel, noting that China favored the withdrawal of all "aggressor troops" from Korea and a peaceful negotiation. Although Zhou's formulations of conditions for Chinese intervention in the Korean conflict present ideas similar to what the CRWT would suggest, this evidence is still too weak to state that the concept of righteous war led Zhou to this point.

The most prominent evidence demonstrating Zhou's consideration of the righteous causes leading to China's decision for war comes from the enlarged CMC meeting of October 6. As mentioned in the section dealing with Mao, Lin Biao expressed his concerns about sending forces to Korea in this meeting. Lin mentioned that it was not worthwhile to save North Korea –

²⁰⁵ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 273-274. The original report please see: *Jianguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao*, vol. 3: 1359-360.

²⁰⁶ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 276-278. The original conversation in Chinese please see: *Zhou Enlai wajiao wenxuan*, 25-27.

a small country with a population of several million – in exchange for damaging China, which had a population of five hundred million. In Lin’s words, China might suffer from U.S. nuclear retaliation, if China pushed the U.S. too far in Korea. Lin suggested that if the Chinese insisted on sending forces, the best way to do so was to keep the forces in the northern part of North Korea and watch the development of the situation, and then decide what to do.²⁰⁷ According to Lei Yingfu’s recollection, after hearing Lin Biao’s objection Zhou delivered harsh criticism:

Now it is not the issue whether we shall fight or not, but it is the U.S. who compels us to fight. Our self-defense is just (正義的), and a just war will certainly win victory at the end. Especially for the current North Korean government, Premier Kim Il-sung has again and again requested us to send our forces to help [North Korea], how can we see someone in mortal danger without lifting a finger to save him?²⁰⁸

Although Zhou did not specifically describe helping North Korea as a “just” reason for China to go to war, he did not exclude that reason from the justification. As we can see, Zhou’s logic is similar to what Mao presented in criticizing Lin’s suggestion, namely, that saving North Korea from ruin was the right thing for China to do. Also, the location and timing of Zhou’s presentation of this remark are worth noting. The remark occurred in another closed-door meeting on October 6. As I mentioned earlier, the circumstances of the meeting might have encouraged the participants to express their real concerns about the Chinese response to the conflict in Korea. In this regard, Zhou’s response might reflect a concern that China had a moral obligation to save North Korea from ruin. Zhou’s tone is also worth mentioning. The just cause was brought up by Zhou to criticize Lin Biao’s proposal advocating inaction. His wording suggests that to Zhou pragmatic calculation should not be the only language spoken in the assessment of China’s decision for war. Rather, the issue of righteous causes should also be considered. Just as Mao did, when he sought to legitimize his decision, Zhou chose the “righteous” argument for war over pragmatic calculation that pointed in the opposite direction.

Zhou’s identified righteous causes again at an executive meeting of the CPPCC on October 24, after the CPV had crossed the Yalu River. At the meeting, Zhou pointed out the reasons for Beijing to enter the war:

²⁰⁷ Lei Yingfu, “Kangmei yuanchao zhanzheng jige zhongda juece de huiyi (xu yi)” (Recall several major decisions in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid North Korea, the first continuance), *Dang de wenxian* (Party Literature), No. 1(1993): 27; and Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1018.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

North Korea has a relatively small [territory], and what it can rely on is a population of nine million. Depending on such [weak] strength to resist such a strong enemy with determination for a protracted resistance, it is rare and commendable and we shall esteem [this behavior]....If North Korea wants victory, it must receive international support. Especially in their difficult time, they need more international supporters. We shall exalt the morality and justice (道義) of revolution. Only when North Korea wins victory, will the [frontline of the] camp of peace not be ripped...If the eastern frontline is wide open, and the enemy is approaching our gate, how can we develop [our country]? China and North Korea are states depending on each other as the lips and teeth. If the lips are gone, the teeth will be cold. If North Korea is slapped down by the American imperialism, the northeast of our country will be unable to stabilize...²⁰⁹

In addition to the ideology of communism and the idea of preventive defense, the context of Zhou's justification is very similar to the CRWT idea of helping a weak state to fight against a stronger state's invasion. At the beginning, he appraises North Korea's behavior as a small power that has no hesitancy to prepare a long-term resistance fighting against a much stronger enemy's invasion. Then Zhou mentions that, in order for North Korea, as a small state in such a difficult time, to win victory, it would have to receive international support with China shouldering the most responsibility. After addressing considerations of righteousness, Zhou then indicated the critical relationship between China's national security and the possible results of the Korean War.

The comparison between Zhou's formulations of October 6 and October 24 provides an important clue to trace the influence of the CRWT upon his decision-making. Zhou's comments on October 6 indicate that the justification for helping North Korea against the U.S. invasion provided him a frame of reference to locate the right decision China should make. A similar expression appeared again when he explained Beijing's decision on a more public occasion on October 24. This consistency between his remarks at private and public occasions suggests that Zhou did believe that the consideration of righteous causes should be applied in the assessment of the decision to go to war.

The next question is whether Zhou made any judgment of U.S. morality when he was making the decision for entering the Korean War. As mentioned in the section on Mao, Washington's Taiwan policy after the outbreak of the Korean War, which committed the U.S. to defend Taiwan, provoked the leaders of PRC. Zhou was of course one of those dissatisfied leaders. On June 28, in his public condemnation, Zhou used the phrase "violent act of predation"

²⁰⁹ Zhou Enlai waijiao wenxuan, 28-29.

to describe the U.S. deployment of the 7th Fleet into the Taiwan Strait.²¹⁰ Between July and August, the major negative terms adopted in Zhou's announcements to describe the U.S. moves in Korea were the words "aggressive" or "aggression."²¹¹ The moral condemnation of U.S. morality peaked during Zhou's protests of the American aerial bombings along the Yalu River. For example, on August 27, Zhou protested:

...with regard to these aggressive and violent (殘暴) behavior invading China's territorial air space made by the American troops invading Korea, it is a serious crime (罪行) to infringe China's sovereignty, kill the Chinese people savagely, and attempt to expand the war and break peace.²¹²

While the North Korean troops in South Korea were collapsing after the Inchon landing, Zhou integrated the condemnations of the U.S. intervention in Korea and aerial bombings along the Yalu River into a statement denouncing the immorality of the U.S. On September 30, in his first warning to the U.S. about its move crossing the 38th parallel, Zhou stated:

The United States deliberately concocted the assault of the Syngman Rhee gang against the Korean Democratic People's Republic in order to expand its aggression in the East and then, on the pretext of the situation in Korea, dispatched its naval and air forces to invade the Taiwan Province of China; [and] announced that the so-called problem of Taiwan's status should be solved by the American-controlled United Nations. Moreover, time after time, it sent its air force, which is invading Korea, to intrude into the air over the Liaodong Province of China, strafing and bombing; and sent its naval forces, which are invading Korea, to bombard Chinese merchant ships on the high seas. *By these frenzied (瘋狂) and violent(殘暴) acts of imperialist aggression, the U.S. government had displayed itself as the most dangerous foe to the PRC.*²¹³

This statement indicates a clear train of thought showing Zhou's assessment of the moral standing of the U.S. The first part of the last sentence concludes that the nature of the U.S., as exposed by its intervention in the Korean conflict, its interference in Taiwan issue, and its military actions along China's borders and territorial air space and waters, is frenzied and violent. At the end, that frenzied and violent nature leads Zhou to state that the U.S. government is the most dangerous foe of the PRC. In other words, Zhou's public warning assigned a morally depraved status to the U.S. because of its behavior in Korea.

²¹⁰ Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan, vol. 4: 30.

²¹¹ Please see, Jiangguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao, vol. 3: 9-10 and 182-183.

²¹² Jiangguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao, vol. 3: 217.

²¹³ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 273-274; and Jiangguo yilai Zhou Enlai wengao, vol. 3: 359-360. Italics added.

On October 3, a similar judgment also appeared in Zhou's conversation with Ambassador Panikkar. When Panikkar mentioned that the Indian government was attempting to put pressure on the U.N. to achieve a peaceful resolution, Zhou replied:

We have exchanged points of view on the Korean incident. We favor a peaceful solution and the localization of the Korean incident. That is still our stand...We want peace and want construction in peacetime. During the past year, we made maximum efforts in this respect. *The U.S. government is unreliable.* Although an agreement reached at the meeting of the three foreign ministers [of France, Great Britain, and the United States in early September] stipulates that the 38th parallel cannot be crossed without the approval of the United Nations, *there is some question whether the agreement is binding on the U.S. government.*²¹⁴

One of the flaws in the moral character of the U.S., according to Zhou, was its unreliability. In Zhou's statement, the responsibility for breaking peace is by no means assumed by Beijing, which had made its maximum efforts to maintain peace, but should be laid on the U.S., which had no sincerity to keep commitments upholding peace. Zhou's perception of the gap between Washington's sincerity to uphold peace and Beijing's implies that, compared to how the U.S. behaved, China stood blameless for intervening in the Korean conflict.

The evidence showing Zhou's characterization of U.S. morality is clearer than that for Mao. Zhou not only specifically used the words "aggressive," "violent," and "frenzied" to describe U.S. acts, but also presented a more complete argument explaining what caused the U.S. transgressions. To Zhou, China occupied perfect moral ground for using force in Korea, and the U.S. was in the opposite position.

Other Leaders

It is still difficult to trace precisely the other high-ranking leaders' perceptions toward the use of force because of the insufficiency of sources. What we know, according to the currently available sources, is that most of the high-ranking leaders, and especially Lin Biao, did not support Mao's decision at the outset of decision-making. But those objections were eventually overcome by Mao's persuasion. In fact, Peng Dehuai, whom Mao asked to be the commander of the CPV and a general with an illustrious career, was a critical factor helping Mao to obtain consensus from the Politburo. Peng's steady support not only reassured Mao about his decision,

²¹⁴ Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue, *Uncertain Partners*, 276-277; and Zhou Enlai *waijiao wenxuan*, 25-26. Italics added

but also alleviated the anxiety among the other comrades. Hence, this section mainly examines the motives and perceptions underlying Peng's decision to support the use of force in Korea.

The first time Peng divulged his tendency to favor intervention in the Korean War by force was in a conversation with Yang Dezhi, the commander of the 19th Army, three days before the Politburo meeting of October 4. According to Yang's recollection, when he reported to Peng that the troops under their command were asking to aid North Korea, Peng replied: "the Americans are going to reach the bank of the Yalu River in the north, and have occupied our Taiwan in the southeast; they are out of their mind. Under such a situation, [we] shall in no case give way."²¹⁵ This opinion was further reinforced after Mao formally summoned Peng to join the circle of decision-making in Beijing.

According to Peng's recollection, after attending the Politburo meeting of October 4, he thought over and over that night about the decision to enter the war:

America occupied Korea across the [Yalu] River, threatening Northeast China. It also controlled Taiwan, threatening Shanghai and East China. It could launch a war to invade China with any excuse anytime it wanted. The tiger always eats people, and the time when it wants to eat depends on its appetite. It is impossible to make any concessions to a tiger. Since America came to invade us²¹⁶, we had to resist its invasion...we should send out troops [to Korea] in consideration of the future of our nation's reconstruction...Our forces ought to be dispatched also in order to encourage the peoples of colonial and semi-colonial countries to carry on their nationalist and democratic revolutions against the imperialists and invasions...²¹⁷

Peng then ruminated about Mao's remarks to the participants at the meeting that the Chinese would feel terrible if they only watched the North Koreans go through a crisis without offering support.²¹⁸ However, Peng interpreted Mao's remarks through a different lens than the CRWT. In his understanding, that remark was an "instruction combining internationalism with patriotism."²¹⁹ Peng believed that the objections of those who were reluctant to support the North

²¹⁵ Yang Dezhi, *Yang Dezhi huiyilu* (Yang Dezhi Memoir) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1993), 502.

²¹⁶ Peng might refer to China and North Korea.

²¹⁷ Quoted in Xiaobing Li, Allan R. Millet, and Bin Yu, trans. and eds., *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, 31-32; original texts please see, Peng Dehuai, *Peng Dehuai zishu*, 266-267;

²¹⁸ Xiaobing Li, Allan R. Millet, and Bin Yu, trans. and eds., *Mao's Generals Remember Korea*, 32.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Koreans in their time of need were being nationalist rather than internationalist. The following day, Peng announced his support for the decision to enter the war with his own explanation that:

Sending the troops to aid Korea is necessary. If we lose, it means nothing more than a couple of years in liberating China. If the American military places itself along the Yalu River and in Taiwan, it could find an excuse anytime it wants to launch an invasion.²²⁰

As a military officer and a follower of communism, Peng regarded the use of force in Korea as a necessary measure to assure China's national security and uphold internationalism. Unlike Mao and Zhou, Peng did not reveal clearly any considerations resembling the ideas of the CRWT. Although he employed negative terms such as "invade" and "tiger" to describe U.S. behavior, it is still impossible to determine whether the CRWT had any influence on Peng's decision to support the war with the U.S. in Korea.

Analysis of the *People's Daily*

For the analysis of the Chinese government's use of judgmental language in the *People's Daily* during the Korean War, this research examines the period between June 27, the first day the *People's Daily* reported the outbreak of the war, and October 19, 1950, the day the Chinese Volunteer Army crossed the Yalu River to enter Korea. There are 115 days of reporting to be analyzed. The target of Beijing's condemnation was the U.S. The total number of words condemning the misbehavior and immorality of the U.S. intervention in Korea is 170, which yields a daily average of 1.478. Among the five case studies in this dissertation, this average is the third highest.

Here, as in the other cases, the analysis, which uses a watershed date to distinguish between daily averages before and after, shows that the Chinese government escalated their moral condemnation of their opponent after a key event occurred. The watershed introduced in the case of the Korean War is September 18, the day the U.S./U.N troops successfully landed at Inchon. As discussed above, because of the success of the Inchon landing the North Korean troops in the south collapsed and the U.S./U.N. troops had opportunity to cross the 38th parallel.²²¹ This

²²⁰ Ibid; and Peng Dehuai, *Peng Dehuai zishu*, 266-267.

²²¹ Allan Millett has recently argued that the Inchon landing was not a strategic success and "did little to defeat the North Korean army." But he also agrees that this campaign "sowed the seeds of a strategic disaster, the Chinese intervention only a month after the landing." See Millett, *The War for Korea, 1950-1951*, 240.

situation eventually triggered the Chinese intervention in the Korean War. Thus, in this method of analysis, the Korean War is divided into two periods, from June 27 to September 18 and from September 19 to October 19, with the daily averages of the wordings 1.341 and 1.806 respectively. The increase in frequency suggests that the Chinese government lowered its assessment of U.S. moral standing between September 19 and October 19, 1950. This result is congruent with my expectation of the variation for the frequency of morality-based condemnation, namely that an increased frequency may appear in a case with China's decision to go to war as the outcome. When the necessity of a decision for war is likely, the Chinese government may express the legitimacy of its use of force by highlighting the moral inferiority of its opponent.

Conclusion

The evidence from this case does not refute my hypothesis about the influence of the CRWT. Rather, it shows that China's leaders had identified their righteous causes for fighting and the moral standing of their major opponent in the decision-making. From the available records, Mao and Zhou did make something of a moral assessment of their decision for war, and the concept of righteous war seemed to offer them a frame of reference to identify its legitimacy. Moreover, both Mao and Zhou emphasized the legitimacy of their decision for war when they encountered dissent from other leaders with different calculations of China's interests. Mao and Zhou rejected this view (most clearly enunciated by the cautious Lin Biao) and insisted that the right thing for China to do was to give full support to North Korea against the U.S. invasion. This result fits my assumption that, when the Chinese leaders have to choose between opposite courses of action proposed by their pragmatic calculations, they tend to select the option that is most compatible with the concept of righteous war. Mao and Zhou's formulation defending their decision between October 2 and October 6 suggests the validity of this assumption. In addition, the records of Mao's decision making show that the concept of righteous war helped him to make up his mind to go to war in Korea. This result supports my assumption that the CRWT may play a role in the decision makers' mind-set shifts.

The supplementary analysis of the *People's Daily*, also results in a supportive finding. The Chinese government increased the frequency of its morality-based condemnation of U.S. behavior in Korea after the Inchon landing. Meanwhile, key Chinese leaders' expressions of

concern about just cause are also found during their decision making behind closed doors. This congruent result supports the interpretation that the Chinese government's use of morality-based condemnation served more than the role of "moral cloak." It appears to confirm the assumption that an increase in frequency should occur in a case resulting in a Chinese decision for war. This finding also suggests that the Chinese government attempted to reinforce the legitimacy of its decision for war by emphasizing the moral inferiority of the U.S.

Chapter 4 - The Second Taiwan Strait Crisis

At 5:30 P.M., August 30, 1958, the PLA stationed in Fujian province suddenly initiated a massive artillery bombardment of the Kuomintang (KMT)-controlled Jinmen island. Because of the intensive shelling, a Chinese Communist invasion of Jinmen and Mazu (another KMT-held island farther north on the Fujian coast) seemed imminent.²²² As soon as it became aware of the crisis the U.S. strengthened its 7th Fleet and decided to support Taiwan in protecting the line of communication to Jinmen. After more than one month of shelling, the crisis mitigated.²²³ On October 6, Mao released a letter in the name of Peng Dehuai to announce a temporary cease-fire over Jinmen. This letter marked the beginning of the end of the Second Taiwanese Strait Crisis. Although both the Chinese Communists and the KMT continued shelling until 1979, the danger of escalation to a more severe conflict faded away in October, 1958.

According to one of the PRC's official records, the artillery bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu was insisted to show Beijing's support for the people of Lebanon and Jordan in the Middle East who were against American and British intervention.²²⁴ This resembles the idea in the CRWT of helping a weak state against a stronger state's invasion. In addition to claiming to support the Arab resistance against American and British intervention in the Middle East, the PRC announced that their people in Fujian province had been terrorized by the KMT's earlier raids on the mainland conducted prior to the shelling of the islands by the PRC. This resembles the justification of stopping violence in the CRWT. Moreover, the American support for the KMT, a group in rebellion by Beijing's definition, offered the justification that a foreign power was illegitimately intervening in China's domestic affairs. During the crisis, the PRC several times accused the U.S. of occupying China's territory – Taiwan and the Penghu islands. This accusation seemed to be offering the justification of defending one's own territory against a foreign state's invasion. In accordance with the CRWT, these justifications offered perfect grounds for legitimizing the decision for war. However, even though the People's Liberation Army (PLA) had already installed ample air assets and enough capability for amphibious landing during the crisis, except for the massive artillery bombardment, the PRC did not attack the KMT-

²²² Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 163

²²³ *Ibid.*, 165

²²⁴ See Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 853

controlled territory and the U.S. military forces intervening in the crisis. It seems that the ideas of the CRWT may not be sufficient to result in a decision for war. This case, thus, can test that why China's leaders decided not to go to war even though righteous causes were announced.

Historical Background

According to recent research, the causes of Beijing's decision to initiate the shelling are various and indeterminate. Several inferences about the motives behind Beijing's decision have been offered: this decision was a response to US intervention in Lebanon in 1958, a strategic reconnaissance for probing the bottom line of Washington's policy supporting Taiwan's defense, a countermeasure against the KMT's raids to the area of Fujian province, an attempt to compel the U.S. to resume the ambassador-level meetings with China in Warsaw which had collapsed in December 1957, a method to agitate the Great Leap Forward, an attempt to carry out the "noose strategy"²²⁵ against the U.S., and a continuation of the 1954 military action to seize the KMT-controlled islands along the coast of mainland China.²²⁶ These inferences suggest that the causes of the Jinmen shelling of 1958 were complex and multiple, and that certain historical contexts since 1953 may help to understand them.

When the Korean War ended in 1953, the Taiwan issue, which had been given a lower priority for three years, received renewed attention from the CCP leaders. In October 1953, Chen Yi, then the commander and political commissar of the East China Military Region, proposed a plan to seize Jinmen and to establish facilities such as railroads and airfields in Fujian province.²²⁷ Mao initially agreed with Chen's proposal. Mao quickly changed his mind to

²²⁵ In the middle of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, Mao claimed that Jinmen and Taiwan, and many other places in the world where the U.S. had military bases, were the "noose" for the U.S., taking Jinmen for example, Mao said: "At present, America has committed itself to an 'all-round responsibility' policy along our coast. It seems to me that the Americans will only feel comfortable if they take complete responsibility for Jinmen and Mazu....America has fallen into our noose. Hence, America's neck is hanging in China's iron noose....America is now moving its head closer to us, since it wants to take responsibility for Jinmen and other islands. Someday we will kick America, and it cannot run away, because it is tied up by our noose." Quoted in Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 187.

²²⁶ Niu Jun, "The Decision-making of the Jinmen Bombardment Revisited," *Guoji Zhengzhi Yanjiu* (International Politics Quarterly) 3(2009): 174.

²²⁷ Xu Yan, *Jinmen Zhizhan* (The Jinmen Battle) (Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi, 1992), 168. Xu does not indicate the exact source he cited. Because of his status as a retired PLA major general, Xu was able to access some

support the strategy of seizing the offshore islands of Zhejiang province rather than pursuing what Chen had proposed, because he believed that before attacking the KMT-controlled islands off the Fujian coast, the PLA should liberate and control several islands still occupied by KMT troops off the Zhejiang coast.²²⁸

Mao's strategic target was not merely to seize those islands, but ultimately to "liberate" Taiwan. In July, 1954, Mao emphasized the agenda of "liberation of Taiwan." He believed that it had been a political mistake that Beijing had not immediately addressed the mission of "liberation of Taiwan" as soon as the Korean War ended.²²⁹ Following Mao's comments, Beijing restarted its propaganda about liberating Taiwan in July and August, 1954. In August, the CMC announced the "Military Plan and Steps of Implementation about Active Struggle against Chiang Bandit Troops in Taiwan." This instruction confirmed a two-step plan to liberate Taiwan: the PLA would seize the KMT-controlled islands and gain air supremacy along the southeastern coast in the first stage, and then liberate Taiwan when the time was ripe. As for the strategy of seizing the KMT-controlled islands, it set two major directions for operations: take small islands first then large islands, and move from north to south.²³⁰ The First Taiwan Strait Crisis erupted in September, 1954, when the PLA executed the plan by initiating a massive bombardment of Jinmen.²³¹ Due to the outbreak of this crisis, Taiwan and the U.S. started and then accelerated the negotiation of a mutual defense treaty, which was signed on December 3, 1954. The signing of the Sino-American Mutual Defense Treaty did not halt the PLA from carrying out military actions to implement the CMC's August plan.

of the classified archives, including the early military plans. According to Zhang Zhen, a member of the 12th CCP central committee, the East China Military Area Command did propose this plan to the CMC, and the CMC instructed Zhang Zhen to make an analysis of it. Chen Yi was the commander of East China Military Area Command at that time. For Zhang Zhen's recollection, see Zhang Zhen, *Zhang Zhen huiyilu* (The Memoir of Zhang Zhen) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2003), 491

²²⁸ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 167-168; and Xu Yan, *Jinmen Zhizhan*, 168-169.

²²⁹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 168; and Wang Bingnan, *Zhongmei huitan jiunian huigu* (Recollections of the Nine Years of Sino-American Talks) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi, 1985), 41-42

²³⁰ Niu Jun, "The Decision-making of the Jinmen Bombardment Revisited," 163; and Zheng Wenhan, *Mishu riji li de Peng laozong* (Marshal Peng as Recorded in His Secretary's Diary) (Beijing: Junshi kexue, 1998), 32.

²³¹ Xu Yan, *Jinmen Zhizhan*, 176.

On January 18, 1955, the PLA launched an amphibious assault on Yijiangshan Island. The PLA seized the island the next day. After the fall of Yijiangshan Island, the Eisenhower administration appealed to the U.N. to mediate the conflict. Meanwhile, because of the fall of Yijiangshan Island, the KMT looked to the U.S. for assistance. In response to the KMT's call for help, on January 29, both houses of the U.S. Congress passed the Formosa Resolution which had been proposed by President Eisenhower to grant him the authority to employ American forces to defend Taiwan and "related positions and territories" against armed attacks.²³² However, after a thorough assessment, the KMT decided to withdraw from the Dachen Archipelago, which had lost its strategic value and was no longer defensible. In February, 1955, under the U.S. 7th Fleet's protection, the KMT troops and civilians in the Dachen Archipelago successfully withdrew to Taiwan. The First Taiwan Strait Crisis ended when the PLA occupied the Dachen Archipelago and ceased shelling Jinmen and Mazu.

Although Beijing had successfully seized the offshore islands in Zhejiang and ensured the coastal security north of Fujian province after the 1954-55 Taiwan Strait crisis, the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the U.S. and Taiwan during the crisis tremendously increased the difficulties the PRC faced in liberating Taiwan.²³³ Therefore, a peaceful settlement resolving the Taiwan issue through negotiation with the KMT became a more attractive option for Beijing. With Mao's support, at the Second Session of the National People's Congress Zhou Enlai stated his intention to seek a possible peaceful settlement with Taiwan.²³⁴ On June 28, 1956, Zhou publicly announced in the *People's Daily* that Beijing was "willing to discuss with the Taiwan authorities about the concrete steps toward, as well as conditions for, a peaceful liberation of Taiwan, and hope the Taiwan authorities, when they deem the time is right, will dispatch representatives to Beijing, or to another proper location, to begin such discussion."²³⁵

In addition to prompting consideration of a possible peaceful settlement with Taiwan, the First Taiwan Strait Crisis led China's leaders to recognize that it was impossible to entirely

²³² The Eighty-Fourth Congress of the United States, "Joint Resolution: Authoring the President to employ the Armed Forces of the United States for protecting the security of Formosa, the Pescadores and related positions and territories of that area," *United States Statutes at Large*, Vol. 69 (1955): 7.

²³³ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 170.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*

²³⁵ *The People's Daily*, June 29, 1956; and Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 170.

exclude the U.S. from having a voice in the settlement of the Taiwan issue.²³⁶ In May 1956, in his conversation with the prime minister of Indonesia, Ali Sastroamidjojo, Mao brought up the possibility of having negotiations with the U.S. on the settlement of the Taiwan issue.²³⁷ Eventually, Chinese-American ambassadorial talks began in Warsaw on August 1, 1955, with Britain and India helping with coordination and communication. However, both Beijing and Washington quickly hit a deadlock when the Americans neither recognized the PRC as the legitimate government of China nor promised to support its recovery of Taiwan.²³⁸ Finally, the talks collapsed on December 12, 1957 – a month after the Chinese had rejected the Soviet policy of coexistence with the Americans – when the U.S. downgraded them to the sub-ambassadorial level.²³⁹

Immediately after the collapse of the Chinese-American ambassadorial talks, Beijing switched from its moderate policy to a militant policy toward Taiwan on December 18, 1957, when Mao instructed Peng Dehuai to consider deploying air forces in Fujian. On January 31, 1958, Peng reported his work to the CMC, which affirmed that the PLA air force could be stationed at the newly constructed airfields in Fujian province in July or August, 1958.²⁴⁰ This report mentioned that in order to suppress the KMT's air raids on the Fujian airfields, an artillery bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu could be a workable precautionary countermeasure.²⁴¹ Mao approved this plan three days later. Peng's report is another significant clue for tracing the causes of the Second Taiwan Strait crisis. Niu Jun has argued that the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis was actually a continuation of the PLA's military plan of August, 1954, which aimed to seize all the offshore islands close to mainland China before liberating Taiwan.²⁴² A successful deployment

²³⁶ Li Chun-ling, "Warsaw Talks and Sino-American Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," *Shixue yuekan* (Journal of Historical Science), vol.7 (2005), 98.

²³⁷ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji ed., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 595-596.

²³⁸ Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 96

²³⁹ Ibid..

²⁴⁰ Wang Yan ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu* (A Chronological Record of Peng Dehuai) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1998), 672.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁴² Niu Jun, "The Decision-making of the Jinmen Bombardment Revisited," 161. This is the conclusion from this article.

of the PLAAF to the airfields to gain air supremacy over the coast of Fujian was the key to achieving that objective. Peng's report of 1958, which was concerned about the success and failure of the deployment of the PLAAF in Fujian rather than about the seizure of Jinmen and Mazu as its ultimate goal, is consistent with such a sequence of ideas. Generally speaking, the shift in Beijing's Taiwan policy at the end of 1957, which restarted the attempt to assert full control over the coastline of Fujian province, could be a remote cause of the Second Taiwan Strait crisis.

The trigger for the Second Taiwan Strait crisis was the tension in the Middle East following American and British intervention in Lebanon and Jordan in mid July.²⁴³ At the same time, the KMT stated that Taiwan's forces were combat ready, prepared to deal with a possible surprise attack.²⁴⁴ These two changes of circumstance triggered the decision to shell Jinmen. On July 17, Mao asked Peng to convey instructions to the General Staff to frame the plan of action for deploying the PLAAF into Fujian and preparing an artillery blockade of Jinmen and its line of communication in response to the crisis situation in the Middle East.²⁴⁵ The next night, Mao announced his decision to support what he called the Arabs' struggle against aggression by pinning down American imperialism through the shelling of Jinmen and Mazu.²⁴⁶

The prelude of the crisis began on July 27 when the PLAAF were stationed at the airfields of Fujian and engaged with the KMT's air forces in the following days.²⁴⁷ But Mao called for an indefinite postponement of the shelling on the same day that the PLAAF and the artillery units were entering Fujian.²⁴⁸ Mao's decision to postpone the shelling confused the other leaders.²⁴⁹ On August 13, Peng even instructed the front units in Fujian that they should return to normal status if the Americans and the KMT did not initiate "unusual military actions" against the

²⁴³ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 175; and Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji ed., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 853.

²⁴⁴ *The Central Daily News*, July 18, 1958.

²⁴⁵ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 176; and Wang Yan ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu*, 691.

²⁴⁶ Wang Yan ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu*, 692; and Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji ed., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 853. For Mao's actual expression please see the section on Mao in the analysis of leaders.

²⁴⁷ Niu Jun, "The Decision-making of the Jinmen Bombardment Revisited," 161

²⁴⁸ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7, 326.

²⁴⁹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 179.

coastal provinces of mainland China in the next few days.²⁵⁰ However, while his commanders were wondering about the chairman's real intention, Mao was actually ready to execute the shelling plan.²⁵¹ The decision had finally been made during an enlarged Politburo conference at Beidaihe beginning on August 17, 1958. On the first day of conference, Mao announced his decision to shell Jinmen.²⁵² The next day, Mao instructed Peng to terminate a military exercise in Shenzhen, Guangdong in order to avoid provoking the British and in order to prepare to conduct the shelling.²⁵³ During this period, Mao summoned Ye Fei, the political commissar of the Fujian Military Region, to Beijing to give him a briefing about the shelling plan. Although Mao had asked Ye if he could avoid any American casualties after the shelling commenced and Ye had given a negative answer, he announced his decision to execute Ye's plan on August 22.²⁵⁴ The shelling began the following afternoon. On the night of August 23, Mao called a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee to reveal his understanding of the international impact of the shelling²⁵⁵ and ordered observation of the American reactions before taking the next step.²⁵⁶

Right after the shelling began, Washington could not completely comprehend Beijing's actual intention.²⁵⁷ In response to the shelling, President Eisenhower immediately ordered the American forces stationed in Asia to be ready for combat, and he transferred two carrier battle groups from the Middle East to East Asia.²⁵⁸ Meanwhile, the American strength supporting Taiwan's defense also had been greatly increased.²⁵⁹ After probing Washington's preliminary

²⁵⁰ Zheng Wenhan, *Mishu riji li de Peng laozong* (Marshal Peng as Recorded in His Secretary's Diary) (Beijing: Junshi kexue, 1998), 330.

²⁵¹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 179.

²⁵² Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 179; Liao Xinwen, "A Historical Examination of Mao Zedong's Decision to Shell Jinmen in 1958," *Dangde wenxian* (Party Literatures), no. 1 (1994), 32.

²⁵³ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol.7: 348.

²⁵⁴ Ye Fei, *Ye Fei huiyilu* (Ye Fei's Memoir) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1988), 515-516.

²⁵⁵ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 182.

²⁵⁶ Wu Lengxi, *Yi Mao zhuxi* (Recalling Chairman Mao) (Beijing: Xinhua, 1994), 74-75.

²⁵⁷ Cheng Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 182; and Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 292-293.

²⁵⁸ Morton H. Helperin, *The 1958 Taiwan Strait Crisis: A Documentary History* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corporation, 1966), 134-136.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

response, Mao called another meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee on August 28 to discuss the American reaction and Beijing's next move.²⁶⁰ Mao divulged that the intention behind his decision to shell Jinmen was to probe the American determination to defend the offshore islands rather than to test the KMT's defensive capabilities.²⁶¹ Mao said: "The main purpose of our bombardment was not to reconnoiter Jiang's defenses on these islands, but to probe the attitude of the Americans in Washington, testing their determination."²⁶² As for the issue of Jinmen, the chairman expressed the flexible attitude that a landing operation was not the only option, but might be carried out if the situation allowed it.²⁶³

The steps in Mao's strategy to probe America's determination were interrupted by a small incident. On August 27, a radio station in Fujian transmitted an unauthorized broadcast announcing that the landing on Jinmen was imminent. Washington immediately recognized this broadcast as a signal that the PLA was preparing to land on Jinmen, and then announced that Jinmen and Mazu were vital to the defense of Taiwan itself.²⁶⁴ In face of the intense American military threat, Mao had no choice but to adjust his strategy. One of the adjustments was to announce the adoption of a new limit for China's territorial waters, which would now be extended from 3 nautical miles to 12 nautical miles. After this announcement, Mao ordered a halt to the shelling for three days in order to probe the American reactions.²⁶⁵ Washington didn't keep the chairman waiting very long. That same day, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles stated that the U.S. should help Taiwan's defense as obligated by the defense treaty and deemed that the security of Jinmen and Matsu was related to the defense of Taiwan. But Dulles also revealed that Washington was willing to resume the ambassadorial meetings to achieve a mutual and reciprocal renunciation of force in the Taiwan Strait.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁰ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 184.

²⁶¹ Wu Lengxi, *Yi Mao zhuxi*, 76.

²⁶² Ibid.; and Li Xiaobing, Chen Jian, and David L. Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958: Chinese Recollections and Documents," Cold War International History Project (hereafter CWIHP) *Bulletin*, nos. 6-7 (Winter 1995), 209.

²⁶³ Ibid., 77.

²⁶⁴ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 184.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 185.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 186.

The Americans' reaction made Beijing understand that, were the crisis to escalate further, they would have to directly confront the U.S. forces. Thus, Beijing adopted another strategy – “fighting while talking” — to handle this change. On the one hand, Beijing continued the bombardment of Jinmen; on the other, Zhou announced that Beijing was willing to resume the ambassadorial meetings with the U.S. on September 6.²⁶⁷ To keep this strategy from getting out of control, Mao strictly prohibited the subsequent shelling from targeting any American vessel.²⁶⁸ On September 5 and 8, Mao justified these new moves to deal with the Americans as part of the “noose strategy.”²⁶⁹

The eruption of the 1958 Taiwan Strait crisis was also a surprise to the Soviet Union, which was not informed by the PRC in advance and was confused about the real intention of the shelling. The Soviets didn't hesitate for long before giving their support to the PRC by warning the U.S. in *Pravda* on August 31, but this statement triggered a vague American threat of nuclear war on September 4.²⁷⁰ Worried about Washington's intention to use nuclear weapons, Khrushchev dispatched Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to Beijing to probe the PRC's real intention and to deliver Khrushchev's draft letter to Eisenhower for Mao to review.²⁷¹ When Gromyko arrived in Beijing, he received a copy of a statement from Zhou Enlai which explained that the aim of the shelling was not to liberate Taiwan by force, but rather to punish the KMT forces and to stop the two-Chinas policy that the U.S. attempting to carry out.²⁷² Although Washington didn't drop its oblique threat to use nuclear weapons, Eisenhower offered an opportunity to resume the ambassadorial talks after receiving Khrushchev's letter.²⁷³

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 185-186.

²⁶⁸ Ye Fei, *Ye Fei huiyilu*, 659.

²⁶⁹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 186-187; and *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7: 378-396.

²⁷⁰ Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 101; American's vague threat of using nuclear weapon, please see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XIX, China*. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1995), Doc. 68.

²⁷¹ Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 101-102.

²⁷² Chen, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 188-189; and Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976* (A Chronological Records of Zhou Enlai, 1949-1976) (Beijing, Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), vol. 2: 166-167

²⁷³ Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 102; Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Radio and Television Report to the American People Regarding the Situation in the Formosa Straits,” John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, The American Presidency Project, September 11, 1958, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=11231>

The suspended Sino-American ambassadorial talks were resumed on September 15, 1958, at Warsaw. According to Chen Jian's argument, Mao originally wanted to probe the bottom line of American commitment to Taiwan and then seek an advantageous result by ending the crisis through the talks.²⁷⁴ However, the PRC's representative, Wang Bingnan, was too quick to expose Beijing's hand, which was to force the KMT to withdraw from the offshore islands in exchange for a ceasefire, on the first day's meeting. Wang's mistake provided the Americans an opportunity to gain the diplomatic initiative by stating that a ceasefire would be the first step toward the end of the crisis.²⁷⁵ Mao was in a rage after learning of Wang's performance in the talks. Since Wang had mistakenly laid out all of Beijing's cards, Mao could not help but abandon the expectation that the ambassadorial talks would be an opportunity to achieve an acceptable resolution with the Americans, and adjust his strategy again.²⁷⁶ Zhou was asked to work out the new plan. On September 18, Zhou proposed a new plan consisting of two elements: on the one hand, he suggested an expanded activity demanding that the Americans cease their provocation and withdraw from Taiwan and the Strait; on the other hand, he believed that a continued massive bombardment of the KMT forces on, and their line of communication around, the Jinmen islands was still needed.²⁷⁷ But after he submitted the plan, Zhou found that massive shelling without a clearly constrained guideline would be inappropriate. On September 22, Zhou further clarified his concerns about the guidelines for operations around Jinmen, proposing that the PLA continue "shelling but not landing" and "cutting off [the enemy's line of communication] but not letting [the enemy] die."²⁷⁸ And only the artillery bombardment, instead of a joint operation, would be conducted. Mao approved this proposal.

While they attempted to regain the diplomatic initiative through propaganda and renewed military action, Beijing's leaders had not yet completely abandoned the hope that the crisis

²⁷⁴ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 192-193; and Wang Bingnan, *Zhongmei huitan jiunian huigu*, 70-73.

²⁷⁵ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 194; U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XIX, China*. (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 1995), Docs. 96 and 100. The U.S. also publicly announced that cease-firing would be the first step toward ending the crisis, see *New York Times*, September 19 and 20, 1958.

²⁷⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 194-196.

²⁷⁷ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976* (A Chronological Records of Zhou Enlai, 1949-1976) (Beijing, Zhongyang wenxian, 1998), vol. 2: 171-172.

²⁷⁸ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 197; Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, Vol. 2: 173.

would end in their favor. On September 27, Zhou discussed three possible scenarios for the development of the crisis with the Soviet *chargé d'affaires* Antonov. One of the scenarios was that if the United States guaranteed the withdrawal of the KMT troops from Jinmen, the PRC would agree to suspend fighting for a period to allow the KMT troops to withdraw.²⁷⁹ Although Zhou had doubts on the possibility of this scenario, Dulles's comment on the Taiwan Strait crisis on September 30 revealed that Washington was concerned to achieve just such an outcome.²⁸⁰

In the CCP Politburo Standing Committee meeting held on October 3 and 4, Dulles's comment became the major issue for the discussion of further strategic planning toward the crisis. In Zhou's opinion, Dulles was implying formalization of the reality of "two Chinas" by trading Jinmen and Mazu for Taiwan and Penghu. Also, both Beijing and Washington had acted prudently to avoid a direct military confrontation and had probed each other's real intentions during the crisis.²⁸¹ In other words, Zhou was implying that it was time to end the crisis.²⁸² In light of Zhou's suggestion and seeking to avoid a separation between China and Taiwan, Mao proposed the idea of leaving Jinmen and Mazu in Jiang Jieshi's hands. At the end, those attending the meeting agreed with Mao's suggestion that, in order to avoid the de facto situation of two Chinas becoming permanent and official, Beijing would leave Jinmen and Mazu in the KMT's control while it maintained the policy of "shelling but not landing" and "cutting off but not letting [the enemy] die."²⁸³

On October 5, Mao instructed Peng Dehuai, the Minister of National Defense, and Huang Kecheng, the Vice Minister of National Defense and PLA Chief of Staff, to suspend shelling for two days beginning on October 6 to observe subsequent developments.²⁸⁴ On the same day, Zhou

²⁷⁹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 198; Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, Vol. 2: 175.

²⁸⁰ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 198; *New York Times*, October 1, 1958. Dulles's comments were released in a news conference on September 30 in Washington D.C. When a reporter asked about the possibility of U.S. renunciation of force in the crisis, Dulles answered: "We obviously believe that if there was a renunciation of force, it should be a renunciation on both sides. We could not expect a unilateral renunciation of force. It should be on the basis of and conditioned upon reciprocity."

²⁸¹ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 199

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Wu Lengxi, *Yi Mao zhuxi*, 83-85.

²⁸⁴ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7: 437.

informed Antonov that Beijing had decided not to occupy Jinmen and Mazu.²⁸⁵ The next day, Beijing released a “Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan” announcing a seven-day cease-fire and a suggestion for peaceful negotiation between Beijing and Taipei. After seven days, on October 13, Peng Dehuai followed orders from the Center to extend the period of ceasefire for two weeks. Although Mao attempted to show that Beijing remained capable of controlling the situation by ordering a one-hour barrage of Jinmen on October 20²⁸⁶, the tension had already been significantly alleviated. On October 23, the announcement of “Another Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan” (again issued by Peng Dehuai but drafted by Mao) marked the final curtain of the Second Taiwan Strait crisis.

Analysis of Leaders

Mao Zedong

To explore whether Mao had been influenced by ideas from the righteous war tradition in making the decision for shelling in 1958, a survey of the application of three justifications is useful: the justification of helping the people in the Middle East resisting the American and British intervention; then, the justification of stopping the KMT’s acts of violence against mainland China; and finally, the justification of resisting the American intervention and support for Taiwan. Although these three justifications can be explained in terms of the logic of *realpolitik*, they could also have provided a frame of reference for Mao to assess the moral permissibility of a decision for war.

On July 18, 1958, at a meeting with the generals from the relevant military units involving the shelling, Mao proposed to take a practical action to support the Arabs who were struggling against the American and British interventions. He mentioned:

The Jinmen bombardment is aiming to strike the United States. To support the Arabs fighting against aggression, [we] shall not only [have] moral (道義上的) [support], but also need to have the support of practical action...Jinmen and Mazu are China’s territory. To attack Jinmen and Mazu, [and] to punish the KMT troops are Chinese domestic affairs, [in which] the enemy [the U.S.] cannot find excuse [to attack us], but [it] will have [an] effect restraining (牽制作用) the American imperialists.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, Vol. 2: 179-180.

²⁸⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 201.

²⁸⁷ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji ed., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 853

It seems that Mao was attempting to use a military action to divert Washington's attention from the Middle East to East Asia in order to support the Arabs. However, on July 27, when Mao postponed the shelling, his letter to Peng Dehuai and Huang Kecheng revealed that this motive was not as firm and urgent as Mao had stated on July 18. He said:

It seems more appropriate to hold our [plan] to attack Jinmen for several days....When they [the KMT] launch a provocative attack, [we will] respond with a counterattack. The solution of the problem in the Middle East will take time. Since we have time, why should we be in a big hurry...? To make a plan too quickly usually results in thoughtless consideration. I did such things quite often and sometimes could not avoid miscalculation....²⁸⁸

These remarks show that Mao was thinking that his early decision was made in too much of a hurry. Niu Jun, a Chinese expert on PRC foreign policy, argues that Mao's decision to shell Jinmen and Mazu continued his policy of seeking to deploy the air force in Fujian province as a significant step toward gaining all the offshore islands. Niu mentions that the timing of the American and British intervention in the Middle East afforded Mao with a good pretext to execute that plan.²⁸⁹

In fact, the sequence between Mao's decisions to postpone and reaffirm the shelling plan gives a clue for examining Mao's mindset about the justification for supporting the Arabs. Although Mao's postponement can be explained by the severe weather delaying the redeployment in Fujian, current sources reveal that most of the artillery units had been deployed by late July.²⁹⁰ This means that military preparations were about ready to execute the shelling on July 27. Thus, if Mao had desired to support the Arabs by meaningful action, he could have accelerated the shelling rather than postponing it and hesitating to act when the preparations were

²⁸⁸ Li Xiaobing, Chen Jian, and David L. Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958: Chinese Recollections and Documents," Cold War International History Project (hereafter CWHIP) *Bulletin*, nos. 6-7 (Winter 1995), 214-215; and the original Chinese sources please see, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7: 326-327.

²⁸⁹ Niu Jun, "The Decision-making of the Jinmen Bombardment Revisited," 161-162.

²⁹⁰ Zheng Wenhan, *Mishu riji li de Peng laozong*, 330. Another version about the weather issue is that due to the typhoon that occurred in late July, the PLAAF and PLA Navy couldn't complete their deployment in time. Hence, Mao probably accepted the front units' suggestion to extend the time for preparation. Concerning this argument please see *Ye Fei huiyilu*, 513. This formulation does not imperil my argument, since it does not refute the truth that the artillery units had generally been deployed already. If Mao had desired to execute a military action to support the Arabs, the capability of artillery would have been sufficient to fulfill that attempt.

almost accomplished. However, Mao announced an indefinite postponement at that time, instead. The date of the start of the shelling and Mao's justification about the timing are also supporting evidence. Right after the outbreak of the crisis on August 23, Mao explained his thinking about the timing of the shelling at a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee meeting. He said that "the day's bombardment was perfectly scheduled," because "three days earlier, the UN General Assembly had passed a resolution requesting American and British troops to withdraw from both Lebanon and Jordan." The chairman went on to say that under this circumstance "American occupation of Taiwan became even more unjust."²⁹¹ But he neglected to explain why the schedule was perfect when the tension in the Middle East was about to be alleviated because of the UN resolution. If supporting the Arabs by distracting America was his real intention, Mao should have acted when the tension was highest in early August.

A conversation between Mao and Khrushchev in 1959 indicates this contradiction between Mao's words and actions. During the conversation, Mao said:

We didn't expect that firing artillery would cause such a big disturbance... [we] didn't expect that they [the U.S.] would redeploy so many vessels [to the Taiwan Strait]. After you left [Beijing], we decided to attack in mid-August... The Americans didn't immediately dope out our real intention, assumed that we were going to attack Taiwan, and then redeployed their troops from the Mediterranean, the Pacific, the West Pacific, Japan, and the Philippines [to the Taiwan Strait]... It [the U.S. response] can explain that the American deployment was in a hurry and in disorder...²⁹²

Whatever his real purpose in this conversation may have been, Mao's statement here actually contradicted what he had said about the justification of supporting the Arabs. First, Mao's astonishment at the Americans' impetuous reaction makes the explanation of support for the Arabs unsound. Without a considerable American reaction which diverted their attention from the Middle East to the Taiwan Strait, it was impossible for China to achieve the purpose of supporting the Arabs in their fight against the U.S. Second, Mao's assessment of the American reaction shows that supporting the Arabs was a pretext rather than a real motive. Mao's assessment implies that the shelling of Jinmen and Mazu was effective in manipulating and disturbing Washington's strategic deployment. Mao's decision to postpone the shelling on July 27 looks even more contradictory considered against his declaration of July 18. Because the

²⁹¹ Li, Chen, and Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," 208-209.

²⁹² Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji ed., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 856.

shelling was so effective in manipulating Washington's moves, it does not make sense that Mao would want to postpone the shelling in late July and early August when the tension in the Middle East was at its climax, if to support the Arabs had been paramount as Mao declared. This inference is similar to Niu Jun's argument that the crisis in the Middle East provided Mao with an impromptu excuse to accelerate the steps already outlined for fulfilling the scheduled plan.²⁹³ Hence, after a thoughtful assessment, Mao quickly postponed his earlier decision. Thus, it can be asserted that supporting the Arabs was more likely a pretext rather than a real motive in Mao's considerations.

Between late 1957 and mid-1958, the KMT executed air reconnaissance and military raids on the mainland several times. At the beginning of the "Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan" released on October 6, Mao emphasized that those military raids were one of the causes which led Beijing to impose punishment upon the KMT troops by military actions.²⁹⁴ Although this can fit within the justification of stopping violence in the CRWT, ultimately it did not result in a decision to dispatch troops to land on Jinmen and Mazu. I will now examine whether Mao had ever embraced this sincerely.

At first glance, Mao's initial decision on July 18 gives the impression that punishing the KMT for its military actions against mainland China was a significant motive for Mao to execute the shelling. He defined ultimate target of the shelling as the U.S., with an explanation – "Jinmen and Mazu are China's territory, [therefore] to attack the KMT troops on Jinmen and Mazu is China's domestic affair, which will not give excuses to the enemy [to intervene]; but it will have a certain effect to pin down American imperialism."²⁹⁵ But this blurred explanation did not offer any specific explanation of the reason for the punishment. Furthermore, when Mao postponed the shelling on July 27, he emphasized that "if the other side invades Zhang[zhou], Shan[tou], Fuzhou, and Hangzhou, a best scenario [for China to react] would emerge."²⁹⁶ This indicates that Mao was expecting the KMT to initiate air raids or artillery attacks upon the mainland, which would provide him with a perfect excuse to launch a counterattack. This expectation not only

²⁹³ Niu Jun, "The Decision-making of the Jinmen Bombardment Revisited," 176.

²⁹⁴ *The People's Daily*, October 6, 1958.

²⁹⁵ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 853.

²⁹⁶ Li, Chen, and Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," 214-215; the original Chinese sources please see, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7, 437.

contradicts the idea of restoring order, which suggests a quick and active move to prevent the situation from going to disorder, but also reveals that Mao didn't judge the KMT's previous military raids as so serious that he had no other choice but to counter them by force.

On August 25, Mao said: "In fact, our bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu with several hundred thousand shells was a probe," and "we did not say if we were or were not going to land." To Mao, landing on Jinmen might come, or not, "as circumstance dictated, because it was 'not a small matter'."²⁹⁷ Mao's political justification for the shelling, according to this evidence, did not reflect a strong feeling that the KMT's previous military raids had to be punished or stopped. Actually, Mao's perspective toward the KMT's military actions cannot be isolated from the idea of the continuity of the Chinese Civil War since 1947. After learning of the error made by the radio station in Fujian, Mao requested the CMC to draft an instruction to centralize the control of the shelling. This draft also indicated the CMC's understanding of the difficulty of recovering Taiwan: "to thoroughly settle all of the problems about Taiwan and the Jiang-occupied offshore islands is not a matter [which can be resolved] in a short time, rather it is a protracted struggle, [for which] we have to have a long term plan."²⁹⁸ According to this draft, Mao clearly presented the decision for shelling as a deliberate act to probe his opponents' capability and intention as part of a long-term plan to "liberate" Taiwan. A quick and decisive action to restore order or punish the KMT's previous military actions seemed not to be part of Mao's thinking.

Mao's talk at the Fifteenth Meeting of the Supreme State Council also verifies that neither restoring order on the southeastern coastline nor punishing the KMT's military actions was his original motive. On September 5, when he mentioned the issue of landing on Jinmen and Mazu, Mao said:

We do not want to land on what are called Jinmen and Mazu. What do you land on them for? Their defense works are considerably firm and solid. [We] just scare them at one swoop. But Jinmen and Mazu are not necessarily to be attacked. When the time comes, we will land on them, [therefore, let's] wait for an opportunity to act.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷ Wu Lengxi, *Yi Mao zhuxi*, 76; and Li, Chen, and Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," 209.

²⁹⁸ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 860.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 862-863.

On September 6, when Mao clarified his noose strategy toward the U.S., saying:

We give Jinmen a hard time, [that means] we are minding our domestic principles. This is our domestic affair. Of course, to give Taiwan a hard time is also minding the domestic principles. But since there are your American soldiers in that place, we nevertheless temporarily will not go there. You [the U.S.] also expressed a lukewarm attitude toward the past negotiations [that caused] a suspension for several months. Now you want to talk, that's good, [we] can talk. If you [China] don't attack, it [the U.S.] will not want to talk. [We] need to grip the noose all at once. [When] it has felt pain, then it says...let's talk. If you don't grip [the noose], it will not talk.³⁰⁰

According to those remarks, Mao intended to use the crisis as a tool to gain an advantageous position in the struggle with the KMT and the negotiations with the U.S. Therefore, since there is no evidence that Mao wished to punish the KMT's military actions or bring stability to the southeast coast, I exclude these motives as an explanation for Mao's decision to initiate the shelling.

When viewed in light of the CRWT, the American intervention, which deployed American forces in the Taiwan Strait in order to support the KMT's defense, might have constituted a righteous cause, with self-defense legitimizing China's use of force. According to my assumption, this righteous cause might have encouraged the Chinese leaders to make a decision for war, especially for an offensive operation. But in this case, the Chinese eventually decided not to go to war with either the KMT or the American forces in the Strait. On the contrary, the American intervention was a significant factor that prevented the crisis from escalating to a severe military conflict. Although Mao had instructed Beijing's propaganda organs to highlight the role of the U.S. as an invader in China's territory, in reality he rarely used emotional, negative, radical, or judgmental language to describe the American intervention in private. In fact, in his discussions about the American reactions, Mao often regarded the shelling as a tool of communication designed for a strategy of probing and bargaining with Washington.

As early as June 16, 1958, Mao had thought about the possibility of resuming negotiation and communication with the U.S. He mentioned that it was possible for China to be in touch with the U.S., but he was not sure that the Americans would actually want the same thing.³⁰¹ He believed China would benefit from a protracted impasse with the U.S. To Mao, the best way to get in touch with the U.S. was letting "the U.S. deliver herself to the gate [of China] after

³⁰⁰ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 865.

³⁰¹ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 851.

dressing up, causing her to be surprised by [the acts of] China.”³⁰² This early thought shows that a surprise action adopted by Mao to compel the U.S. to come back to the negotiating table was probable. Mao’s decisions on July 17 and August 18, which suggested that the ultimate target of the shelling was the U.S., verify that the artillery bombardment was a means of attempting to break the impasse with Washington. Thus, the evidence confirms that before the crisis Mao didn’t really see the U.S. as the intolerable invader he trumpeted in the propaganda later.

Mao’s prudent response to the American intervention after the outbreak of the crisis evidenced his reluctance to have a direct confrontation with the U.S. as well. Ye Fei’s memoir vividly records Mao’s perspectives toward the Americans. On August 21, Mao asked Ye Fei, “You use so many shells to attack [Jinmen and Mazu], will [you] kill the Americans or not?” Ye said it was possible to hit the Americans, because the U.S. had expanded its help to the KMT’s troops by attaching the Military Assistance Advisory Group down to the battalion level. Mao further asked, “Can [you] avoid hitting the Americans or not?” Ye replied that “it is unavoidable.” Mao didn’t ask any further questions and ended the conversation.³⁰³ Although Ye Fei’s negative answers didn’t cause Mao to cancel the shelling, this conversation shows that Mao was not only reluctant to take the risk of hitting Americans, but also did not regard the U.S. as an intolerable invader of China’s territory. On September 7, after learning that the U.S. and KMT navies were adopting a coordinated formation to supply Jinmen, Mao instructed Ye Fei that he was not allowed to attack the American vessels, and even a counterattack was not permitted if the Americans initiated fire.³⁰⁴ This instruction strengthens the conclusion that the U.S. intervention in the crisis did not provide a main motive, namely, defending China’s territory from foreign invasion.

Likewise, Mao’s explanation of the noose strategy held to the same tone in evaluating the American intervention. On September 6, Mao clarified his “noose strategy,” which meant adopting constrained military action to force the U.S. to take China’s requests seriously.³⁰⁵ Mao’s September 6 remarks not only paved the way for conducting the noose strategy, but also confirmed the shift in the role of the U.S. from Mao’s perspective. He mentioned: “[for] the

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ye Fei, *Ye Fei huiyilu*, 516.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 865-866.

affairs with the U.S., in general, [both China and the U.S.] had better settle [their disputes] by negotiations, [and] had better [have a] peaceful settlement, [because] we are all peace-loving people.”³⁰⁶ Mao clearly understood that it was impossible to resolve any dispute with the U.S., including the Taiwan issue, without a peaceful method. In other words, in Mao’s mind the role of the U.S. had shifted from an enemy, who could only be dealt with by confrontation, to a rational opponent, who could be handled by negotiation and peaceful communication.

Similarly, Mao’s general directives to Wang Bingnan before Wang left Beijing for the ambassadorial meeting display the same perspective toward the Americans. Mao said to Wang:

In the meeting with the Americans, you should make more use of persuasive means....In the meeting, [you] should make more use of your brain, [behave] modestly and prudently, don’t speak excessively provocative language, which had been adopted in the negotiations at Panmunjom, to the Americans, [and] don’t hurt the Americans’ national feeling. Both China and America are great nations, and should become reconciled [with each other].³⁰⁷

Even when Mao adjusted his strategy in an aggressive direction because of Wang’s error in the meeting, a direct military confrontation with the U.S. was still not the option for his new method. In his comments on Zhou Enlai’s “About the Conduct of the Jinmen Operation,” Mao approved Zhou’s proposal, which abandoned the option of attacking Jinmen through a joint operation in order to avoid hitting American vessels and aircraft.³⁰⁸

Mao’s moderate perspective toward the U.S. and its intervention explains why he could switch his stand without difficulty in ending the crisis by letting Taiwan keep Jinmen and Mazu and accepting the reality of the continued presence of the U.S. in the Strait. When Mao accepted Zhou and other CCP leaders’ assessment of the achievement of strategic goals in successfully probing U.S. intentions, it seemed that he was not deeply hostile to the U.S., which was ostensibly an intolerable invader responsible for the crisis according to Beijing’s definitions. On the contrary, Mao seemed to be treating the Americans’ reactions and behavior as signals showing the scope of their commitment to Taiwan. Thus, according to the evidence and my

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 866.

³⁰⁷ Wang Bingnan, *Zhongmei huitan jiunian huigu* (Nine Years of Sino-American Talks in Retrospect) (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1985), 72-73.

³⁰⁸ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7: 424-425; Zhou’s report please see, *Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan*, vol. 4: 403.

inferences, Mao in this case seemed not to possess a strong sentiment or motive similar to those found in the CRWT.

Zhou Enlai

As with Mao, so with Zhou, three justifications – helping a weaker state to fight against a stronger invader, punishing the KMT’s military raids so as to stop the violent, and stopping and expelling the U.S. invasion of China’s territory – are the main criteria for judging whether Zhou embraced ideas similar to those of the CRWT.

On several occasions Zhou showed his foreign guests that China saw the British-American intervention in the Middle East as an act of invasion that needed to be strongly condemned.³⁰⁹ The clearest statement about China’s position was released in Zhou’s letter to Abd al-Karim Qasim, the Prime Minister of the newly established government of Iraq, on July 27, 1958. Zhou wrote that “the Chinese government and Chinese people will do all we can to support your government and people’s struggles for maintaining [your] national independence and [for helping you to fight] against the invasion of imperialism,” and “the Chinese government and Chinese people will set our face against the American and British imperialists’ acts of aggression which occupy Lebanon and Jordan by force, threaten the Republic of Iraq and other Arab states, and break the peace of the Middle East and the World.”³¹⁰ Although Zhou’s tone was firm, he didn’t say specifically which methods the Chinese government and people would adopt to support the Arabs. This ambiguous remark was not unique. Between July 15 and August 23, in his conversations with foreign guests, Zhou never said that China would do all in its power to support the Arabs, even though he did mention that the American and British intervention should be condemned strongly and would be punished by history.³¹¹

In fact, after the shelling, Zhou’s public pronouncements contradicted his words in the letter to Abd al-Karim Qasim; “About the Situation in the Taiwan Strait,” on September 7, evidenced this contradiction. Although it was a collective work released in the name of Zhou³¹², this

³⁰⁹ Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1422.

³¹⁰ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 157.

³¹¹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol.2: 154, 158, and 160; *The People’s Daily*, August 1, 15, 16, 17, and 18, 1958.

³¹² Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 166.

statement is still a valid source for tracing Zhou's perspective since it must have been reviewed, corrected, and approved by Zhou himself before being released. In this statement, Zhou mentioned:

In order to divert the attention of people around the world [from watching] the Americans' continued invasion of the Middle East and delayed action of withdrawal from Lebanon, the U.S. goes so far as to mass considerable armed forces in the Taiwan Strait and publicly threaten to expand its range of aggression to Jinmen, Mazu, and other offshore islands by taking advantage of this situation. This is a serious act of provoking war to six hundred million Chinese and a serious threat to the peace of the Far East and the World.... While the U.S. has not yet withdrawn [its] aggressive troops from Lebanon, [it] immediately creates a new hazard of war in the area of the Taiwan Strait. This [will] let all the states and people loving peace around the world further recognize the arbitrary face of the American aggressor deliberately breaking the peace and further recognize that American imperialism is the most ferocious enemy to all the movements of national independence and world peace in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.³¹³

Although the language is very strong, this statement happens to show that the goal of supporting the Arabs, if it existed, was minor. If Zhou (or other Chinese leaders) had truly endorsed what he had promised to the Arabs as presented in the letter to Abd al-Karim Qasim, he should have emphasized that China's reason for initiating the shelling was to support the Arabs. In fact, that was what Zhou did in the Korean War when he highlighted the justifications for the Chinese to enter the war on October 24, 1950 after the Chinese troops had crossed into Korea.

On the contrary, Zhou reversed the relationship by implying that the Americans' response, which diverted world attention from their presence in the Middle East by creating a new crisis in the Taiwan Strait, was the major cause of the tension. The strategic concerns behind Zhou's formulation reveal the minor role of the motive of supporting the Arabs. His statement was a countermeasure to Dulles' September 4 speech, which implied the U.S. would expand her defensive commitment to Taiwan in the Taiwan Strait.³¹⁴ Thus, by taking advantage of Dulles's words, Zhou attempted to manipulate China's image by putting China in the same position as the Arabs, with both suffering from American acts of aggression. This propaganda move manifested itself after the crisis began, when Zhou (and perhaps all the other leaders in Beijing) had no more interest in playing the supporter of the Arabs against aggression, and China could pose as a victim of American aggression itself.

³¹³ *The People's Daily*, September 7, 1958.

³¹⁴ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 166.

Moreover, the explanation that Beijing was supporting the Arabs becomes even more untenable because Zhou's statement didn't say a word in condemnation of the British intervention in Jordan. Mao's instruction to temporarily halt the military exercise on August 18 verifies this inference. In that instruction, Mao said, "Do not conduct military maneuvers in Guangdong and Shenzhen, so that the British will not be scared."³¹⁵ Both documents confirm that Mao and Zhou did not regard Britain as an opponent of China. The separation of Britain from the group of their main opponents suggests that the British intervention in Jordan had no influence upon Mao and Zhou's decision to shell Jinmen. On September 6, at the Supreme State Conference, when Zhou commented on Dulles's statement³¹⁶ of September 4, he said, "The shelling is [to] test him [the U.S.], this time [our] test [has a] result, [which is that] Dulles has played this card."³¹⁷ This remark explains why Zhou separated the British from the group of China's opponents in the crisis. The shelling, according to Zhou, was a test probing the real intention of the U.S. and its reaction to the affair in the Taiwan Strait. For this reason, even though the British were doing the same thing as the Americans, an intervention in the Middle East, and even though the Chinese claimed that they would take practical action to support the Arabs, the Chinese still preferred to exclude the British from their list of opponents. This is to say that, for Zhou, either supporting the Arabs was merely an impromptu smokescreen or Britain was not recognized as one of the aggressors against the Arabs. The latter assertion, however, is clearly wrong. As mentioned earlier in this section, Zhou wrote to Abd al-Karim Qasim on July 27 that the Chinese people strongly opposed both "the American and British imperialists' acts of aggression which occupy Lebanon and Jordan by force." Obviously, Zhou regarded both the U.S. and British interventions as aggression against the Arabs. Thus, taking the above inferences into account, the justification of supporting the Arabs cannot be regarded as one of Zhou's real considerations.

³¹⁵ Li, Chen, and Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," 215; the original Chinese source please see, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 7: 348.

³¹⁶ In this statement, Dulles revealed that the U.S. had not yet made a decision to employ its armed force to secure or protect Jinmen and Mazu, but would use it if the situation required. This statement also announced that the U.S. had not abandoned hope of achieving a peace resolution with the PRC. See U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Volume XIX, China*, Docs. 68.

³¹⁷ Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1424.

Using the available sources, this research cannot determine whether Zhou sincerely embraced the motive of punishing the KMT's military raids by force in coming to his decisions. On September 5, when Zhou explained the purposes of shelling to the counselor of the Soviet embassy in Beijing, he emphasized that it didn't aim at liberating Taiwan, but only at punishing the KMT troops and preventing the U.S. from executing the "Two Chinas" policy.³¹⁸ But in this conversation he didn't clarify what the KMT had done that needed to be punished. The specific reasons for punishment were announced the next day in Zhou's public statement – "About the Situation in the Taiwan Strait." Zhou mentioned that "the Jiang Jieshi clan, with U.S. support, for a long time has used Jinmen which is close to Xiamen, Mazu which is close to Fuzhou, and other offshore islands as the outposts to carry out all sorts of raids and sabotages against mainland China."³¹⁹ This implied that the KMT's military raids against mainland China caused Beijing to launch the shelling. Zhou's statement, as a countermeasure to Dulles's September 4 speech, was attempting to exaggerate the illegitimacy of the position of the U.S. by emphasizing that the shelling of Jinmen and Mazu was China's domestic affair. On September 4, Mao said to Hu Qiaomu, his political secretary, and Wu Lengxi, the director of Xinhua News Agency, that:

...at present our media should give wide publicity to a condemnation of America for causing tension in the Taiwan Strait...our propaganda should emphasize that Taiwan and the offshore islands are Chinese territory, that our bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu was aimed at punishing Jiang's army and was purely China's internal affair, and no foreign country would be allowed to interfere with what happened there.³²⁰

Taking this consideration into account, Zhou's formulation in the September 6 statement was a propaganda tactic to satisfy Mao's instruction, and this is not sufficient to verify that Zhou really did think that way.

Zhou's statements after Wang Bingnan's error in the ambassadorial meeting also manifest the propaganda function of the language referring to the act of punishment. As mentioned earlier, Wang's error left Beijing no choice but to adopt an aggressive stance for recovering the diplomatic initiative. In order to counter the U.S. request for a ceasefire as the precondition for ending the crisis, Beijing launched a diplomatic offensive, demanding the withdrawal of the

³¹⁸ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 166.

³¹⁹ *The People's Daily*, September 7, 1958.

³²⁰ Li, Chen, and Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," 210.

American forces from the Taiwan Strait.³²¹ To justify this request, Beijing had to emphasize that the bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu, or the possible “liberation” of the offshore islands and Taiwan, was China’s domestic affair in which foreign countries would not be allowed to interfere. This kind of formulation permeated Zhou’s conversations with his foreign guests between September 18 and 21.³²² For example, Zhou told Gopalaswami Parthasarathy, Indian ambassador in Beijing: “we expect to settle the Taiwan issue with Jiang Jieshi through peaceful negotiations. [But] Jiang’s troops frequently raided the coast of mainland China, [and that is] the situation we cannot stand.”³²³

Indeed, Zhou’s language referring to acts for punishing the KMT owed much to propaganda. More precisely locate Zhou’s views, his public statements commenting on the KMT’s military raids between December 1957 and August 23, 1958. However, an examination of the reports related to the KMT’s military raids in the *People’s Daily* during that period gives no sign of any comment or condemnation issued by Zhou. For example, on December 23, 1957, a KMT aircraft was reported to have been shot down in Fujian province; but Zhou (and actually all of the Chinese leaders) made no comment on it. The absence of any condemnation by Zhou of the KMT’s military raid may be explained by the fact that as one of the highest-ranking leaders, it was inappropriate for Zhou to make any comment on tactical-level issues, lest doing so degrade his status. If this is the explanation, then Zhou’s subsequent formulation after the crisis occurred would have been self-evidently a sophisticated ploy magnifying a minor issue for propaganda purposes.

Zhou’s first public comment related to the U.S. during the crisis appeared in his conversation with the counselor of the Soviet embassy in Beijing on September 5, 1958. He mentioned that one of the purposes for initiating the shelling was to prevent the U.S. from implementing the “Two Chinas” policy.³²⁴ This seemed to imply that the U.S. policy toward the Taiwan Strait, which offered support to Taiwan, led Beijing to initiate the bombardment. In his September 6 statement, Zhou used the harshest tone in regard to the presence of U.S. in the Taiwan Strait. He said that the presence of the U.S. power in the Taiwan Strait was not only an

³²¹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol.2: 170-171.

³²² Ibid., 171-173.

³²³ Ibid., 172.

³²⁴ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol.2: 166.

invasion of Chinese territory, but also would provoke the Chinese people.³²⁵ As mentioned before, for both Zhou and Mao, the September 6 statement had its propaganda purposes, lying behind the strategic considerations in countering Dulles's statement about the U.S. commitment to defend Taiwan. And the harsh language used in the propaganda organs was a tactic dictated by Mao.³²⁶ Thus, although this statement demonstrated a tough tone toward the U.S. reactions, it cannot offer valid evidence confirming Zhou's perspectives toward the U.S.

A more moderate view of the U.S. was presented in Zhou's private conversation with Cao Juren, a secret envoy between Beijing and Taipei, on September 8. Zhou told Cao three possible results the KMT troops stationed on Jinmen and Mazu would face: the first was to live or die together with the islands, the second was to voluntarily withdraw back to Taiwan, and the third was to withdraw from the islands under U.S. pressure.³²⁷ In terms of these three scenarios, it seemed that Zhou didn't recognize the U.S. as an intolerable aggressor invading Chinese territory; rather he acknowledged tacitly the undeniable reality that the U.S. was a power present in the Taiwan Strait.

When Beijing launched a new diplomatic offensive after September 16, the language branding the American deployments in the Taiwan Strait as an invasion of China and the cause of the tension appeared again in Zhou's talks with his foreign guests.³²⁸ Although that language condemned the U.S. deployment in the Taiwan Strait as a provocation and threat to the Chinese people, Zhou actually had no appetite for a direct military confrontation with the U.S. On September 27, Zhou had explained to Antonov three possible scenarios for the development of the crisis:

- a) When the time comes, the U.S will prepare to make a concession [and] China and the U.S. will find a compromise solution. If the U.S. will guarantee the withdrawal of Jiang's troops [from Jinmen], we [China] agree to hold a period to allow Jiang's troops to withdraw...
- b) Both sides keep [this tension] on, [and] continue the stalemate...
- c) the U.S. prepares to put [her] head into the noose....³²⁹

None of the three scenarios suggested a directly military confrontation to expel the U.S. from the Taiwan Strait. These assessments tacitly acknowledged that Zhou was not willing to remove

³²⁵ *The People's Daily*, September 7, 1958.

³²⁶ Wu Lengxi, *Yi Mao zhuxi*, 79.

³²⁷ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol.2: 168.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 171 -173, and 175-176.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

Taiwan (perhaps including the Taiwan Strait) from the U.S. sphere of influence by force, even though the PRC continued to claim Taiwan as a part of China's territory. Zhou's "About the Conduct of the Jinmen Operation,"³³⁰ which suggested avoiding the risk of hitting American vessels and aircraft by canceling a joint-operation attack on Jinmen, also asserts that the U.S. was not an intolerable invader that had to be expelled, but an opponent with which direct confrontation should be avoided. Zhou's tacit acknowledgment implies that he did not really perceive the presence of the U.S. military force in the Taiwan Strait as an invasion of China's territory.

In the meetings of the Politburo's Standing Committee making the decision to end the crisis between October 3 and 4, Zhou summed up his perspective toward the U.S. during the crisis. Zhou said:

By now both had some ideas about the other's bottom line.... Americans knew that we neither intended to liberate Taiwan in the near future nor wanted to have a head-to-head clash with America.... Our test by artillery fire in August and September was appropriate because the Americans were forced to reconsider what they could do in the area. At the same time, we restricted our shelling to Jiang's ships, not American ships. Our naval and air forces all strictly observed the order not to fire on American ships and airplanes. We acted with caution and exercised proper restraint... we put up quite a pageant in our propaganda campaign to condemn America's occupation of our Taiwan territory and to protest American ships and aircraft invading our territorial waters and air space. Our propaganda had mobilized not only the Chinese masses but also the international community to support the Arab peoples and put very heavy pressure on the American government.³³¹

It can be discerned that Zhou's conclusion was very moderate and pragmatic in assessing the interactions between China and the U.S. in the crisis. This moderate formulation once again reveals that the motive of expelling the "aggressive" Americans from Chinese territory did not influence Zhou's decision. In Zhou's view, the shelling was a strategy forcing the U.S. to reconsider the role and power of China while dealing with the Taiwan issue. In other words, for Zhou the U.S. was not an invader of China by definition, but an opponent whose presence in the Taiwan Strait was accepted.

³³⁰ Zhou Enlai *junshi wenxuan*, vol. 4: 403

³³¹ Li, Chen, and Wilson, trans. and ann., "Mao Zedong's Handling of the Taiwan Strait Crisis of 1958," 211

Other Leaders

In 1958, Peng Dehuai was the Minister of National Defense and the Vice Chair of the CMC, and also the highest military officer directly involved in planning and conducting the bombardment of Jinmen. As a Vice Chair of the CMC, Peng also chaired CMC meetings several times when Mao (the Chair of the CMC) was absent during the crisis. Thus, the role Peng played in this crisis leads me to select him, in addition to Mao and Zhou, as an object of investigation to observe the Chinese leaders' considerations about the shelling. However, during the crisis, Peng did not specifically mention the reasons for the shelling as Mao and Zhou did. For this reason, I only trace what can be found in Peng's assessments and instructions for the operation to see if he mentioned any justification similar to what the CRWT would suggest.

According to the available sources, Peng seems to have had no firm belief that the shelling would eventually be carried out while the crisis was fermenting. On July 18, Peng participated in the CMC meeting summoned by Mao for communicating the decision to support the Arabs by executing the artillery bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu. Then, Peng announced Mao's instruction at another meeting of the presidium of the enlarged CMC. Peng added another instruction that the following meetings should not last too long, because all the generals and important military officers would be gathering there and it would be difficult to handle the situation if fighting began at that time. Shortly thereafter Peng made a personal comment on the situation, "I think there will not necessarily be a fight."³³² Peng's comment seemed to doubt the possibility that Mao's instruction would be immediately put into action. This indirectly suggests that Mao's July 18 instruction was a whim prompted by the Lebanon and Jordan crisis rather than a thorough decision.

Peng's perspective toward the crisis in the Middle East shows that he did not link the shelling or manipulation of the crisis to support of the Arabs. On July 22, Peng stated his opinion on the situation in the Middle East at the enlarged CMC meeting. He said:

After the revolution occurred in Iraq on July 14, the British and Americans dispatched their forces to Jordan and Lebanon... In terms of the development of the situation for the previous eight days, one of the possible futures is to develop into a major war, and the other is a stop [of the escalation]. At the present, the possibility

³³² Zheng Wenhan, *Mishu riji li de Peng laozong*, 311.

of the latter is higher [than the former]. But there is no danger when there is preparedness; we still need to have preparedness for combat.³³³

On July 24, in another CMC meeting, Peng again offered his assessment of the crisis in the Middle East:

There are three possible [scenarios for the development of the] situation in the Middle East. The first is to escalate to a major war, the second is that the British and Americans will not withdraw [their troops], and the third is the withdrawal of the British and American troops. Most probably, the possibility of the second [scenario] is higher [than the others]. Our war preparedness [can be conducted] based on [the hypothesis of] the second possibility, and [should] be ready for [dealing deal with] the first possibility, and [will] strive for the situation of the third possibility.³³⁴

None of these formulations displayed an obvious linkage between the Middle East crisis and the decision for shelling. Besides, Peng's benchmark for preparation for war suggested that he recognized a severe military conflict or war was not imminent, even after knowing Mao's July 17 instruction. Peng's suggestion that the PLA should attend to preparation for war mainly based on the assumption that the British and Americans would not withdraw from the Middle East meant that global tension would be in the middle range between the severest and the easiest situations. In the same meeting, Peng's comments on the schedule for building up the mechanized divisions and the plan for establishing and training the militia confirm this inference. Peng suggested building up 20 mechanized divisions for executing the missions of rapid maneuver and anti-airborne operations by 1962. Three regiments of militia could be established in each coastal province in advance, and then the organization would be broadened down to the military sub-districts after the accomplishment of the Second Five-Year Plan (1958-1962).³³⁵ These schedules for building up military units disclose a moderate plan of preparation for war, which was not intended to handle the situation of an imminent war. This confirms that Peng (and perhaps other leaders as well) recognized that a large-scale military action or a war was not on the list of means for fulfilling Mao's instruction.

It is understandable that Peng adopted a moderate perspective toward the shelling, because he might have thought the decision to shell Jinmen and Mazu was merely one of the methods to achieve the deployment of the PLAAF into Fujian's airfields, which had been approved by Mao

³³³ Ibid., 315.

³³⁴ Ibid., 317.

³³⁵ Ibid., 317-18.

in March 1958. On January 19, 1958, under Mao's instruction of December 18, 1957, the Fuzhou Military Region submitted to Mao and the CMC a report which discussed the issue of deploying the PLAAF in Fujian and proposed the plans and means to suppress the KMT's possible reactions.³³⁶ In order to avoid being placed in a disadvantageous and passive position by possible KMT air raids, this report put the option of artillery bombardment of Jinmen and Mazu on the list of countermeasures.³³⁷ Right after he received this report, Peng led a discussion about preparations for the PLAAF entering Fujian in the CMC meeting.³³⁸ On March 5, Peng wrote a letter to Mao to report the plan for deploying the PLAAF in Fujian. It suggested that the PLAAF should enter Fujian between July and August, and the frontline units could execute the shelling of Jinmen and Mazu if necessary. Three days later, Mao replied: "about the issues of deploying [the air force] in Fujian, [I] agree with your opinion...but [about] the final execution of deployment, I will decide when the time comes."³³⁹ In the light of this context, Peng might have consistently believed that Mao kept agreeing with his plan to deploy the PLAAF in Fujian.

Meanwhile, this inference offers a clue to resolve the puzzle of why Peng strained to grasp the meaning of Mao's instruction to halt the shelling on July 27.³⁴⁰ Because the PLAAF had started moving its first wave into Fujian on July 27, Peng may have wondered whether Mao's undated suspension of shelling was a signal that the artillery operation would not be a required countermeasure to secure the air force's entry into Fujian. In other words, Peng's confusion may have originated from his purely military viewpoint toward the entire artillery operation, which was different from what Mao had discerned through the lens of political and strategic assessment. Peng's viewpoint based on a purely military assessment can be found in his August 6 directive aimed at conducting the air operations. Peng proposed three guidelines:

First, all the Jiang's and American airplanes intruding into our territorial air space should be brought down resolutely, [but we] shall not cross the boundary line of our territorial waters while pursuing them. Second, [with regard to] the Jiang's and American airplanes intruding into our territorial air space to execute bombing missions, [we] can pursue them over the boundary line of our territorial waters, but not exceeding 12

³³⁶ Wang Yan, *Paoji Jinmen* (The Bombardment of Jinmen) (Jiangsu, China: Jiangsu wenyi chubanshe, 1992), 56-60.

³³⁷ Ibid., 56-60.

³³⁸ Wang Yan ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu*, 672.

³³⁹ Ibid., 674-675.

³⁴⁰ Zheng Wenhan, *Mishu riji li de Peng laozong*, 321.

kilometers. Third, the American and Jiang's transport planes intruding into our territorial air space shall be compelled to land on our airfields, or be shot down if they resist. But as for the airplanes outside of our territorial air space, we will do nothing. To the transport planes flying from Taiwan to Jinmen, [we] will temporarily not attack, and wait to take action until the enemy has bombed us.³⁴¹

It is clear that in Peng's viewpoint, the U.S. and the KMT were an indivisible enemy. This tendency seems to put Peng in a more confrontational position than Mao and Zhou would occupy later, when they thought the struggle with the Americans should be prudently handled and prevented from escalating to a direct military confrontation. This instruction reflects the purely military consideration that both the American and KMT air power were tactical obstacles to the success of the PLAAF's operations. Without removing these obstacles, the security of the PLAAF stationed in Fujian would not be achieved. The restriction on the scope of pursuing hostile airplanes also supports this inference. From the military point of view, it would be wise to avoid an ambitious adventure, which might incur unwanted troubles by mistakenly entering traps in the depth of enemy airspace, when the PLAAF was attempting to establish its power over its side of the Strait and was not yet strong enough to compete with its opponents' air superiority over the entire Strait. Therefore, based on this instruction, it is highly probable that to secure the PLAAF movement into Fujian was the top priority for Peng's conduct of military actions before Mao decided to shell.

Peng's August 13 instruction, which suggested that the frontline units should return to normal status if the Americans and KMT did not initiate "unusual military actions" in the next few days, testifies to the validity of this assumption as well. Based on Beijing's assessment, the PLAAF had basically come to dominate the air space over the offshore islands after about a half-month struggle with the KMT's air force.³⁴² If the achievement of the plan for moving the PLAAF into Fujian had been Peng's first priority, his August 13 instruction may prove this conjecture correct. Because of the promising situation in the struggle for air superiority, the artillery operation as an auxiliary countermeasure to secure the air force's operation would have seemed less of an imperative than what the previous plan had suggested, when the PLAAF had almost gained control of the airspace over the offshore islands on August 13. In this situation, Peng may well have believed that the initial stage for moving the PLAAF into Fujian, which

³⁴¹ Wang Yan ed., *Peng Dehuai nianpu*, 695-696.

³⁴² Ye Fei, *Ye Fei huiyilu*, 514-515.

should have been the most critical time for the entire operation, had been securely accomplished. Hence, to Peng, it was safe to not execute the auxiliary plan – launching the shelling of Jinmen and Mazu — since the original objectives had mainly been achieved.

In sum, my inference suggests that Peng tended to regard the artillery operation as an auxiliary plan for achieving the plan of moving the PLAAF into Fujian before the outbreak of the crisis. Perhaps because of his position, Peng was very much stuck on the military viewpoint of conducting military operations before the shelling began. As my inference has shown, it is highly likely that until August 18, when Mao revived the decision to shell, the execution of the artillery bombardment against Jinmen and Mazu was not a fixed option in Peng's mind. Since there is no concrete evidence showing that Peng had a strong political opinion to justify the artillery operation, I suggest that Peng didn't possess ideas similar to what the CRWT would suggest in regard to the decision to shell Jinmen and Mazu.

Analysis of the *People's Daily*

To conduct the analysis of the *People's Daily* in this case, I observe the period between July 17 and October 28, 1958, for examining the Chinese assessment of the moral standing of their opponents in the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. July 17, 1958, was the first day the *People's Daily* reported on the American intervention in Lebanon, and October 26, 1958, was the day that the Chinese government released the “Second Message to the Compatriots in Taiwan” in the *People's Daily*, marking the end of the crisis. There are a total of 102 days to be examined. The reports about U.S. intervention in the Middle East, Taiwanese military actions over mainland China, and U.S. intervention in the Taiwan Strait are the objects examined to produce the number of morality-based condemnations generated by the Chinese government. The total number of words condemning those actions is 295, which yields a daily average of 2.892. This daily average is higher than in the case of Korean War (and highest among the cases examined in this dissertation).

September 15, when the Sino-American ambassador-level meetings were resumed in Warsaw, is the watershed date dividing the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis into two periods. Language from the CRWT tends to come into play especially after Chinese leaders recognize that their attempts at non-violent resolutions have encountered deadlock. In this case, the resumption of Sino-American ambassador-level meetings on September 15 was the obvious

event that provided a channel of communication for negotiating a possible resolution. Using this date as dividing line, I can examine the variation of morality-based condemnation between the period of escalation and the period of de-escalation in this crisis. The days of observation number 61 (July 17 – September 15) and 41 (September 16 – October 26) in the two periods. In the first, the number of words is 71, and the daily average is 2.958. In the second, the number of words is 116, and the daily average is 2.829.

The evidence suggests that the Chinese government did not significantly increase or decrease the morality-based condemnation after the tension had begun de-escalating. But neither can this result refute my assumption, because an increased frequency of morality-based condemnation should not be found in this case unless the outcome was a decision to go to war. The computed frequency in this case suggests that when a decision for war is unlikely, the Chinese government will not emphasize the legitimacy of its use of force by increasing the amount of moral condemnation heaped upon its opponents.

Conclusion

The case of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis yields mixed finding about the influence of the CRWT. Although China's leaders claimed that their shelling had three justifications, which were helping the people in the Middle East resisting the American and British intervention, stopping the KMT's violent acts, and resisting the American intervention in the Taiwan Strait, none of these had a significant impact on the Chinese leaders' decision making. More specifically, these justifications did not convince China's leaders to go to war against the KMT and the U.S. troops deployed in the Taiwan Strait.

The initial intention of China's leaders for the shelling in 1958 may explain why the concept of righteous war had such negligible influence on the Chinese decision-making in 1958. To the Chinese leaders, the purposes for initiating the shelling were multiple, including the attempts to probe the bottom line of Washington's support for Taiwan's defense, to compel the U.S. to resume the ambassadorial meetings, and to cover the PLA deployment of air forces to the Fujian airfields as a prerequisite for seizing the KMT-controlled islands along the coast of mainland China. Those intentions did not recommend a decision for war to the Chinese when the shelling started. Also, during the crisis, neither Mao nor Zhou was interested in escalating the

conflict; instead, both of them preferred to limit the level as well as control the development of the conflict.

These facts suggest that the two circumstances under which the CRWT is most likely to influence decision-making – when China's leaders have encountered an impasse in decision-making (such as when different pragmatic arguments point toward opposite courses of action), and when they perceive that their attempts at nonviolent solutions have encountered deadlock – did not occur during the entire crisis in 1958. In other words, in this case China's leaders never encountered the best time to apply the ideas of the CRWT because they never really entered in the process of making the decision for or against war. This case also shows another circumstance limiting the influence of the CRWT, namely, that when the Chinese leaders were making a decision for the use of low-intensity force (not full-scale war), they would be less influenced by the consideration of just causes. Moreover, the Chinese leaders' uses of language, in this case, suggest that the presentation of righteous legitimacy may have been a smoke screen covering the real intentions of Chinese leaders to initiate a low-intensity conflict.

The findings from the analysis of the *People's Daily* are also mixed. No significant variation is found in the frequency of Beijing's morality-based condemnation of its opponents. Between the escalating and de-escalating stages of this crisis, the Chinese government seems not to have significantly shifted its judgment of its opponents' moral standing. However, this result is entirely consistent with my finding that there is no visible influence of the CRWT on China's leaders in this case. This congruent result seems to agree with my assumption about the application of morality-based condemnation, because no increase in the frequency of morality-based condemnation is found in this crisis in which the Chinese did not make the decision for war.

Chapter 5 - The Sino-Indian War

The Sino-Indian War of 1962 is the second major foreign war of Mao's era. Before the 1990s, the reasons that caused the Chinese to decide on a war with India were little known. From looking at the open sources, some scholars believed that India's hard-line policy in the negotiations and India's implementation of its "Forward Policy" paved the way for Beijing's decision to use force.³⁴³ Since the 1990s, with new publications in Chinese and the release of authoritative materials, scholars have argued that Beijing's decision was not only prompted by India's uncompromising attitude, but also can be traced back to Chinese perceptions of India's policy toward Tibet.³⁴⁴ In other words, from the late 1950s, Beijing increasingly suspected that New Delhi wanted to seize Tibet from China, and India's Forward Policy enhanced this suspicion.³⁴⁵ Thus, punishing India and terminating both India's effort to seize Tibet and its aggressive moves along the Sino-Indian border were identified as factors in Beijing's decision to go to war in 1962.³⁴⁶ These recent discoveries make the Sino-Indian War one of the most likely candidates for testing the role that the CRWT plays in the Chinese leaders' decision making.

Historical Background

The controversial Sino-Indian boundary, divided by Nepal and Bhutan into the eastern and western sectors, which had been left behind by British imperialism dating from the 19th century, was the biggest factor contributing to the root cause of the outbreak of the Sino-Indian war. In the eastern sector, it was all about the disputable boundary line – the McMahon Line. This line was agreed by the British and Tibet in the Simla Accord of 1914, which Chinese governments have never accepted. In the western sector, the dispute was about the ownership of Aksai Chin,

³⁴³ See Allen S. Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence: India and Indochina* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001); Neville Maxwell, *India's China War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970); and Neville Maxwell, "Sino-Indian Border Reconsidered." *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, No. 15 (1999), 905-918.

³⁴⁴ John W. Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," in *New Directions in the Study of Chinese Foreign Policy*. Edited by Robert S. Ross and Alastair Iain Johnston (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006), 86-130; and Xu Yan, *Zhong Yin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang* (True history of the Sino- Indian border war) (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books Ltd., 1993), 37-54.

³⁴⁵ Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 96-97.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 86-87.

where the British Empire never had a clearly defined boundary line. After its independence, India inherited the British Empire's perspectives toward those controversial boundaries.³⁴⁷ For the eastern sector, the Indian government recognized that the McMahon Line was the uncontested boundary line between China and India. For the western sector, India adopted a more aggressive definition that the line should be drawn along the northern edge of Aksai Chin.³⁴⁸ This meant that almost the entire Aksai Chin plateau was claimed by India. Of course, those Indian-claimed boundary lines have never been accepted by any Chinese government. In the 1950s, a line of actual control came into existence, although both sides had never reached an official agreement on its location. In the eastern sector, the McMahon line became the line of actual control, even though the Chinese had never approved its legitimacy. In the western sector, the Chinese effectively controlled the Aksai Chin plateau.

Until 1958 a satisfactory settlement for resolving the boundary dispute seemed highly probable because of the friendly relationship between China and India.³⁴⁹ China's completion of the Xinjiang-Tibet road and India's negative reaction to it dimmed the chance of a settlement in 1958. When both sides argued about the authority for building the Xinjiang-Tibet road in their diplomatic communications between 1958 and 1959, the boundary dispute was formally brought into the open. Although these diplomatic communications resolved nothing and each side stuck to its own vision, the Sino-Indian boundary remained calm until the first half of 1959 when the Tibetan uprising erupted. In order to suppress the revolt and to control the deteriorating situation, the Central Military Commission (CMC) of the PRC approved an armed suppression operation in Tibet, which achieved its purpose at the end of March 1959.³⁵⁰ The end of the Tibetan rebellion, however, ignited the first Sino-Indian boundary conflict.

Indian public opinion quickly took note of the behavior and presence of the Chinese in Tibet and put considerable pressure upon Nehru by urging the Indian government to take certain

³⁴⁷ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 67-71.

³⁴⁸ Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 89.

³⁴⁹ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 90.

³⁵⁰ Chen Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union." *Journal of Cold War* 8, No. 3 (Summer 2006): 77.

actions to help the Tibetans.³⁵¹ Under this pressure, Nehru expressed to Beijing his sympathy for the Tibetans and concerns about China's acts in Tibet.³⁵² The Chinese did not appreciate New Delhi's policy attempting to thrust a hand into the Tibet issue, and replied with open criticism.³⁵³ Although that criticism was firm, the Chinese, particularly Mao, had no desire to entirely break the friendship with India.³⁵⁴ Mao even instructed Pan Zili, the Chinese ambassador to India, to express China's friendship to the Indian government after that criticism was released.³⁵⁵

Mao's hope to maintain a close friendship with India became more and more unrealistic as the numbers of troops on the both sides of the border increased. For the Chinese, implementing the armed suppression meant that more troops would be deployed in Tibet to control the situation, and they would also be deployed along the McMahon Line to cut the Tibetan refugees' lines of escape.³⁵⁶ The increased number of the Chinese troops along the border made the Indians anxious about Beijing's real intention. In response to China's deployment, New Delhi increased its armed forces in that area to enhance its control of the North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) in order to offer help and receive the refugees from Tibet.³⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the Indians did not restrict their scope of action. Some Indian troops entered the areas north of the McMahon Line, such as Khinzemane, Tamaden, and Longju.³⁵⁸ These military actions eventually led to the first military clash between China and India at Longju on August 25, 1959.³⁵⁹ About two months later, on October 21, another military clash occurred at the Kongka Pass in the western sector.³⁶⁰

³⁵¹ Xu Yan, *Zhongyin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang*, 53; Jin Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1498; and Maxwell, *India's China War*, 103.

³⁵² Chen Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union," 85.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 87. The opened criticism was released under the title of "The Revolution of Tibet and Nehru's Philosophy" in the *People's Daily*, May 6, 1959.

³⁵⁴ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 8: 268-270.

³⁵⁵ Xu Yan, *Zhongyin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang*, 55.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 58.

³⁵⁸ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi* (The Historical Records of the Chinese Communist Party) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2003), book 7, vol. 2: 61.

³⁵⁹ Chen Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union," 89; and *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 7, vol. 2: 64.

³⁶⁰ Chen Jian, "The Tibetan Rebellion of 1959 and China's Changing Relations with India and the Soviet Union," 89.

These incidents in 1959 did not alter the Chinese attitude toward maintaining friendship with India. On November 3, 1959, Mao brought up the idea of both sides imposing a demilitarized zone along the boundary to create a favorable climate for negotiation.³⁶¹ In addition, the Chinese government expressed that it was ready to have a premier-level meeting with India, if the Indian government agreed.³⁶² On November 7, Zhou Enlai conveyed to Nehru China's suggestion of imposing a coordinated demilitarized zone upon the actual line of control by both sides as the prelude for diplomatic discussion.³⁶³ Yet the Indians refused to accept this proposal unless the Chinese government accepted the boundary line defined by New Delhi. New Delhi's insistence meant that Beijing would not only have to recognize the McMahon Line, but would also have to unilaterally surrender to India around 20,000 square kilometers in the western sector.³⁶⁴ Even though New Delhi's response was disappointing, the Chinese government insisted on implementing a self-imposed demilitarized zone within Chinese-controlled areas in accordance with Mao's instruction. Meanwhile, Zhou continued to inform India of China's wish to have a premier-level meeting.³⁶⁵ On February 5, 1960, Beijing finally received a positive response from Nehru that a summit meeting devoid of negotiations was welcomed by the Indian government.

For the Chinese, the outcome of Zhou's trip to India was another disappointing development. Originally, Zhou's objective was to achieve a general agreement with India in order to alleviate the tension and to create a precondition for future negotiations.³⁶⁶ His basic strategy for the talks was to express that China would continue endorsing the five principles of coexistence, maintain the status quo on the border, avoid conflict over the boundary, and remain open to peaceful negotiation.³⁶⁷ Zhou believed that Beijing's goodwill could significantly relieve the tension and reconcile certain differences between China and India. Due to the very

³⁶¹ Jin Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1509.

³⁶² Ibid.

³⁶³ Ibid., 1510.

³⁶⁴ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 136.

³⁶⁵ Xu Yan, *Zhongyin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang*, 69; and Jin Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1512.

³⁶⁶ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 302; and Jin Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1515.

³⁶⁷ Jin Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1515.

fundamental contradiction between China and India on the border issues, Zhou's efforts were destined to fail to achieve substantial agreement with India. After meeting with Nehru seven times, Zhou received nothing but two lukewarm agreements from the Indian government that both governments should draft a report on the border issue based on historical and other sources, and this report should be submitted to both governments by the end of September, 1960; meanwhile, both sides should do everything to avoid any friction and conflict along the boundary.³⁶⁸ To Zhou, the final joint statement was unsatisfactory because it did not reflect China's position and positive attitude on resolving the disputes. He then held an impromptu press conference to express Beijing's standpoint and to make public the original statement drafted by the Chinese government.³⁶⁹

If the unsuccessful premier-level talks of 1960 were a turning point shifting the Chinese from a conciliatory attitude to a tough position in dealing with India's acts on the border, India's implementation of the Forward Policy, particularly its expanded activity in the eastern sector, was the last straw for the Chinese in making up their mind to resolve the wrangle over the border by force. For the Indians, the period between 1961 and 1962 was a good time to execute their Forward Policy. Unfavorable international and domestic developments, such as disclosure of the Sino-Soviet dispute, a degenerating economic situation caused by the Great Leap Forward, and unmitigated confrontation with the U.S., would not allow Beijing to freely devote its attention and resources to the Tibet-Xinjiang area, which had a low priority among China's strategic concerns. Moreover, China's previous concessions, such as the restrained reactions in the two incidents of 1959 and the self-imposed demilitarized zone, strengthened New Delhi's misconception that the Chinese would react to nothing no matter how aggressively the Indians acted within the Chinese-claimed territory. India's victory in regaining Goa from Portugal in December 1961 helped make triumphalism pervasive among the Indians.³⁷⁰ Under these circumstances, the Forward Policy was formally put into action at the end of 1961.

Until February 1962, the Chinese had had no clear idea about the new Indian moves on the borders. After learning of India's new moves, the CMC decided to resume armed patrols and re-

³⁶⁸ *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 314; and Jing Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1524.

³⁶⁹ Jin Chong-ji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1524-1525.

³⁷⁰ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 175-177.

establish the line of posts, which had been abandoned since 1959.³⁷¹ But the Chinese reactions were still restrained. The CMC limited the frontline units' freedom of action by imposing strict rules of engagement and a prohibition against abandoning any posts without orders from higher headquarters.³⁷² This directive was designed to preserve room for diplomatic maneuver in persuading the Indians to go back to the negotiating table. Beijing's attempt failed, however, because the Indians were unmovable in their Forward Policy. This made Beijing's language become stronger and more threatening. On February 26, Beijing warned New Delhi in a note that its acts along the border were dangerous and might cause "serious consequences" (嚴重後果).³⁷³

Regardless of China's enhanced diplomatic efforts, there was no sign of a change in India's new border policy; moreover, the Indian military activities significantly increased in the western sector in April. In response to this situation, on April 19 the CMC ordered the frontline units in the western sector to establish posts at strategic positions.³⁷⁴ The diplomatic channel between Beijing and New Delhi was also flooded with China's protests about Indian actions on the border in the following days. On April 30, Beijing delivered to New Delhi a significant protest with two warning signals. First, "if the Indian government refuses to withdraw all posts [which have invaded China's territory] and continues to provoke the Chinese posts, the Chinese border forces will have no choice but to execute self-defense, and then India will have to take full responsibility for all the consequences caused by such choices." Then, the second warning announced that the Chinese troops would resume their patrols in the western sector and China

³⁷¹ *Zhong yin bianjiang ziwei fanji zuozhanshi* (A Combat History of the Sino-India Border Self-defense War) (Beijing: Junshi kexue chubanshe, 1994). This book was written and edited for internal circulation, and its number of hard copies is few; thus, it is difficult to access to the hard copies of this book even within China. But this book can be accessed through an official approved Chinese website (China's National Defense Information Network): <http://info.cndsi.com/html/20051126/1754143209.html>.

³⁷² *Zhong yin bianjiang ziwei fanji zuozhanshi*, <http://info.cndsi.com/html/20051126/1753143115.html> This record does not offer any concrete evidence showing the decision to resume armed patrols and re-establish posts. The other sources affirmed that a CMC meeting made that decision before the spring of 1962, but without a specified date. This evidence can be found in Shi Bo edited, 1962, *Zhong yin dazhan jishi* (Record of Events in the Sino-Indian Major War, 1962) (Beijing: Dadi chubanshe, 1993), 182; Xu Yan, *Zhongyin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang*, 85.

³⁷³ *The People's Daily*, April 15, 1962.

³⁷⁴ *Zhong yin bianjiang ziwei fanji zuozhanshi*, <http://info.cndsi.com/html/20051126/1753143115.html>

would consider expanding this decision to the eastern sector if the situation didn't take a favorable turn.³⁷⁵

To the Indians, Beijing's warnings looked more like a bluff³⁷⁶ rather than a threat, especially after two events occurred in the western sector in May and July. At the beginning of May, Chinese and Indian troops endured a tense confrontation in the area of the Chip Chap River. Another tense confrontation occurred in the area of the Galwan Valley on July 5. In both events, the Chinese chose to withdraw voluntarily from the confrontation in order to avoid serious clashes. These results convinced New Delhi not only that Nehru's assessment of Beijing's attitude, which was that the Chinese would do nothing except bluff in response to India's moves, was right, but also that steadfast execution of the Forward Policy was the right means for the Indians to ensure their borders.³⁷⁷

Although the Chinese media employed strong language to condemn the Indian acts in these incidents³⁷⁸, the Chinese withdrawals seem to have been an attempt to leave room for a peaceful resolution with the Indians. In fact, the Chinese were not yet ready to break their relationship with India when the rest of world had not yet grasped the crux of the dispute. In a meeting of the Secretariat of the CCP's Central Committee, Mao brought up considerations such as these.³⁷⁹ In this meeting, Zhou and Liu Shaoqi, the President of the PRC, proposed two solutions for the border dispute to the Secretariat: either to expel the Indian posts by force or to do so by any possible measures but force.³⁸⁰ After hearing the report, Mao said:

[Because] the Indians established posts in our territory, we have a flawless reason to fight against them. But [we] still need to restrain ourselves, and cannot be in a hurry to fight. Why? First, we need to let Nehru further expose his true face. Now Nehru is getting dizzy with success and believes that his rascally tactic is very resourceful... Second, [we shall] win the international community over to recognize the correct understanding

³⁷⁵ *The People's Daily*, May 3, 1962.

³⁷⁶ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 237.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 239.

³⁷⁸ Until July, two major notes were sent to India on May 11 and June 2 respectively; see *the People's Daily*, May 15 and June 10. Also, on June 21 the *People's Daily* reported an incident that a Chinese family was shot by Indian troops crossed the McMahon Line on May 29.

³⁷⁹ The date of this meeting is unclear according to current sources, but it should be held between July 14 and 16, 1962.

³⁸⁰ *Zhong yin bianjiang ziwei fanji zuozhanshi*, <http://info.cndsi.com/html/20051126/1755143249.html>.

of truth and falsehood in the Sino-Indian border disputes, win the majority over to sympathize with and support us, especially winning over the nations who are in the middle of the road; some nations in international community do not observe the problem of the Sino-Indian border clearly, [they] cannot figure out who is right and who is wrong. Meanwhile, our struggle with India is a complicated international issue; [it is] not merely having a problem with India, [but also with] American imperialism and the Soviet Union etc. [which] are supporting India. They want to take advantage of us [when we are] temporarily in difficulties [by] pushing us to go into battle, and [thereby] give us a hard time. But we will not fall into this trap; we now shall insist on not firing the first shot. Our guiding principle consists of eight characters: *jue bu tui rang, bi mian liu xie*; 決不退讓, 避免流血 [never yield, avoid bloodshed].³⁸¹

Therefore, for limiting India's moves on the border without the outbreak of armed conflict, Mao proposed the policy of "military coexistence" (*wu zhuang gong chu*, 武裝共處). On July 20, the PLA General Staff Department embodied Mao's directives in a "twenty-character directive" that the border force should "absolutely not give ground, strive resolutely to avoid bloodshed, interlock [with Indian forces] in a zigzag pattern, and undertake a long period of armed coexistence (*jue bu tui rang, lizheng bimian liu xie, quan ya jiao cuo, chang qi wuzhuang gongchu*; 絕不退讓, 力爭避免流血, 犬牙交錯, 長期武裝共處)."³⁸²

Nevertheless, China's strategy failed to persuade the Indians to alter their Forward Policy. Worst of all, the Indians took China's response as a signal of weakness and were encouraged to expand the Forward Policy to the eastern sector.³⁸³ On June 4, New Delhi ordered a small Indian unit to establish a post in the area of Che Dong, located on the southern slope of Thag La Ridge but north of the McMahon Line. As Maxwell has argued, that decision marked the point of no return.³⁸⁴ From now on, the Indian government would regard such acts and achievements along the McMahon Line as a part of their strategy for successfully implementing the Forward Policy and an aid to their advance in the western sector.³⁸⁵

Beijing did not know of India's actions in the area of Che Dong until September 8 when a Chinese armed patrol entered that area. Without an order from above, the Chinese troops had no

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² *Zhong yin bianjiang ziwei fanji zuozhanshi*, <http://info.cndsi.com/html/20051126/1755143249.html>; and Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 111-112.

³⁸³ Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 109.

³⁸⁴ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 296.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., 297.

choice but to settle into nearby positions and monitor the Indian post.³⁸⁶ This reaction worsened New Delhi's delusion that the Chinese would do nothing even if under Indian attack.³⁸⁷ This misconception eventually resulted in the appearance of Operation Leghorn on September 9: the Indian 7th Brigade was ordered to move to Che Dong and to be ready for battle; it was also expected to encircle the Chinese troops if possible.³⁸⁸ While the Indians were preparing Operation Leghorn, their troops had started to expel the Chinese from the area of Che Dong by force. Between September 21 and 24, several serious clashes, which resulted in some Chinese soldiers killed and wounded, occurred under the Indians' initiative in the eastern sector.

The September clashes led the Chinese to elevate the level of warning. On September 22, the *People's Daily* printed an editorial titled "If this can be tolerated, then what cannot be tolerated?" (*shi ke ren, shu bu ke ren*). This editorial suggested that the Chinese people could never tolerate their territory being freely invaded by India, and could never be indifferent to seeing their border soldiers "brutally" killed. It warned that the "Chinese government, Chinese people, and Chinese border forces do not possess unlimited patience."³⁸⁹ The Chinese warnings failed again. Between September 24 and 26, the Indians initiated another two clashes at Che Dong, causing seven more Chinese casualties.³⁹⁰

At the beginning of October, Beijing started to accept that China's previous acts and warnings could not stop the Indians from continuing their course of action in the eastern sector. On October 5, the PLA General Staff Department reported to Zhou about the movement of the Indian troops in the eastern sector. This report concluded that the Indian government "had made up its mind to drive the Chinese back." Zhou immediately instructed that "if the Indian troops get to work in the eastern sector, we shall not only bash them back, but also can annihilate some of their posts in the western sector at the same time," and he ordered Luo Ruiqing, the Chief of the General Staff, to accelerate the preparation and deployment on the border.³⁹¹

³⁸⁶ Maxwell, *India's China War*, 298.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 298-300.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 303-304.

³⁸⁹ *The People's Daily*, September 22, 1962.

³⁹⁰ *The People's Daily*, September 26 and 27, 1962; and Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence*, 92.

³⁹¹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, Vol.2, 500.

The Chinese made their last attempt to persuade India to halt its Forward Policy by diplomatic means on October 3, with a warning stating that, “whenever India attacks, China is sure to strike back.”³⁹² Although the signal was tough, this note also indicated that Beijing still wished to have unconditional negotiations with India.³⁹³ New Delhi didn’t appreciate Beijing’s suggestion, and India set a precondition for negotiations: that the Chinese relinquish Indian-claimed territory in the western sector and stop invading India’s NEFA (including the area of Che Dong).³⁹⁴ On October 6, the day India rejected China’s October 3 suggestion for negotiation, the Chinese delivered another note asserting their sovereignty over the area of Che Dong with a warning that the Indians would eventually “perish by the flame [they] played with.”³⁹⁵

India’s rejection of the Chinese suggestion on October 6 is a crucial event in tracing the ultimate decision of China’s leaders to act. As Xu Yan has argued, the CMC did not resolve to execute a counterstrike until New Delhi rejected Beijing’s suggestion for holding unconditional negotiations.³⁹⁶ On the same day, the CMC and Mao decided to conduct a constrained counterstrike against the Indian action. The situation in the eastern section entered an explosive stage after the CMC and Mao’s instruction and after the Indian government put Operation Leghorn into action. On October 10, the Chinese launched their first counterstrike against the Indians since 1959. This constrained counterstrike successfully expelled the targeted Indians from their positions at Tseng Jong.³⁹⁷ To the Chinese, this action was a demonstration showing their teeth and expressing to the Indians that the Chinese would do what they said by translating their tough language into action.³⁹⁸ Beijing’s attempt to stop New Delhi’s advance failed again. The Indians were not shocked by their defeat at Tseng Jong. Instead, they only felt unsatisfied with the result and insisted on keeping their troops in their positions. On October 12, at the airport at New Delhi before his trip to Sri Lanka, Nehru made a statement announcing that war was likely and calling for preparations. This statement confirmed that “the armed forces had

³⁹² Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence*, 107; and *The People’s Daily*, October 7, 1962.

³⁹³ *The People’s Daily*, October 7, 1962.

³⁹⁴ *The People’s Daily*, October 10, 1962.

³⁹⁵ *The People’s Daily*, October 8, 1962.

³⁹⁶ Xu Yan, *Zhongyin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang*, 108.

³⁹⁷ Maxwell, *India’s China War*, 339-340.

³⁹⁸ Xu Yan, *Zhongyin bianjie zhi zhan lishi zhenxiang*, 108-109.

been ordered to throw the Chinese aggressors out of the NEFA.”³⁹⁹ It was the final assertion that the Indian government would not be interested in negotiation with the Chinese government until the Chinese had completely evacuated the Thag La Ridge. Not only India but also other states, including China, saw Nehru’s statement as a declaration of war. For the Chinese, all they could do in response to that statement was concede or go to war. The Chinese had no choice but to accept the latter option and publicized this decision as the last warning on October 14. Two days later, Lei Yingfu, the Deputy Chief of Operations of the General Staff, reported to Mao about the reasons for India’s *de facto* declaration of war against China. According to Lei’s memoir, this report cleared up Mao’s doubt that a decision for war with the Indians would be needed.⁴⁰⁰

China’s leaders officially achieved a consensus at an enlarged politburo conference on October 18.⁴⁰¹ It began with a discussion of international sentiment, the situation on the fronts, the General Staff’s plan for counterstrike, intelligence, the latest Indian troop movements, and the PLA’s deployments.⁴⁰² Zhou then drew the conclusion that China had no choice but to execute a self-defensive counterstrike. Mao approved this conclusion. At the end, the participants selected October 20 as the date of the counterstrike.⁴⁰³ Two days later the Chinese launched their first large assault in the area of the Namka Chu River.

Analysis of Leaders

Mao Zedong

Two sorts of righteousness-based justification can be traced to explore the influence of the CRWT in Mao’s decision-making. First, self-defense is the most obvious justification. The second justification, which could be seen as a derivative of the first, is stopping the violent behavior of the Indians.

³⁹⁹ Quoted in Whiting, *The Chinese Calculus of Deterrence*, 114.

⁴⁰⁰ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 209.

⁴⁰¹ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 7, vol. 2: 113; Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, Vol.2: 503; and Wu Dian Yao et al., *Zhu De nianpu, 1886-1976* (Chronological Records of Zhu De) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian chubanshe, 2006), Vol. 3: 1852.

⁴⁰² *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 7, vol. 2: 113.

⁴⁰³ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 210.

To Mao, India's unyielding Forward Policy not only made no sense for a resolution of the border issue, but also caused India to invade Chinese territory. When the border dispute was brought into the open in 1959, Mao's thinking was simply that the Chinese would do everything within reason to avoid bloodshed or conflict with the Indians. In Mao's plan, the keynote of China's India policy was maintaining friendship.⁴⁰⁴ Mao's decision for a demilitarized zone on the border suggested as much. He envisioned India embracing the same idea of avoiding conflict, as can be seen in his amendment to Zhou's letter to Nehru saying that, "if both governments cannot produce a very well-arranged resolution [to the border issues], I am afraid that border conflict, which both governments will be reluctant to face, will occur from now on."⁴⁰⁵ Also, Mao's remarks portrayed China as a socialist state advocating peace and opposing wars; therefore, China would not seize even an inch of territory from other states, but at the same time it would never allow others to take any Chinese territory by force.⁴⁰⁶

As Mao portrayed it, China was a peace-loving country but with the proviso that China's territory was not to be invaded by any foreign state. This proviso was challenged when India carried out its Forward Policy. Mao was still hoping to maintain the status quo on the borders when the Indians established posts in the western sector. His directives for adopting a low-intensity defensive posture against India's expansion and the flow of Chinese diplomatic notes and protests to India support this assumption. The Chinese discovery of India's action at Che Dong on September 6 fundamentally broke Mao's attempt to maintain the status quo. The presence of an Indian military force at Che Dong meant that an actual invasion of China's territory had taken place.

But why didn't this obvious justification yield an immediate decision by Mao to use force? The obvious answer is that a peaceful resolution was still possible, according to the Chinese responses. When India rejected China's last proposal for unconditional negotiations on October 6,

⁴⁰⁴ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 8: 268-270.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 580.

⁴⁰⁶ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 204. Lei assigned Mao's reasons for not responding aggressively to Indian actions to three categories. The other two categories were: the domestic development needed a favorable international circumstance and putting enmity against India would significantly endanger China's strategic posture where the Chinese would face threats from multiple directions, including the Soviet Union, the U.S., and India.

Mao's attitude toward the Indian military actions seemed to start fundamentally shifting. With a tough tone, Mao instructed the border troops:

If Indian troops attack us, then [we] will ruthlessly strike them back. In addition be well prepared in the eastern sector of Tibet, [our troops in] the western sector also need to operate in coordination. If they attack, [we] will not only repel them, but also will ruthlessly bash them and make them feel pain (打狠打痛).⁴⁰⁷

This shows that the former policy of restraint had been replaced by a more positive, but still defensive, guideline in the face of India's aggressive moves. This directive also indicates that of the two sectors, the eastern sector was the more sensitive area and Mao's main concern. Also, the disclosure of Operation Leghorn convinced Mao that a massive Indian attack to seize Chinese territory was unavoidable and unalterable.

However, Mao's decision for a war against the Indians seems not to have been made until October 12 when Nehru made his statement calling for war. When Lei Yingfu reported to Mao an assessment of Nehru's call for war on October 16, Mao responded that he was ready for a decision for war in response to the Indian military actions on the borders. In this conversation, Mao initially asked, "Why does Nehru have to fight against us?" When Lei hesitated to reply to the question, Mao pressed again: "Tell me [your thought], why after all does Nehru want to meet us on the battlefield?" Then, Lei laid out five key reasons that had been identified by a research group of the General Staff. After hearing the first four reasons⁴⁰⁸, Mao stopped Lei's report and asked, "It is not enough to explain why Nehru is so truculent and savage because of these four reasons; under the circumstance that we forgave, forbore, and conciliated them again and again, why do they still want a war with us?" Finally, Lei pointed out the fifth reason, which satisfied Mao's concerns: Nehru's savagery was because he believed that the Chinese would never strike back no matter how far the Indians pushed. Lei reported that the strategic envelopment created by the Soviet Union, India, and the U.S., China's lessened capability since it had not recovered from natural disasters, and the situation of China's strategic deployment with only a few non-

⁴⁰⁷ *Zhong yin bianjiang ziwei fanji zuozhanshi*, <http://info.cndsi.com/html/20051126/1760143501.html>.

⁴⁰⁸ Those four reasons are "a desire to turn Tibet into 'a colony or a protectorate' of India --- the core Chinese belief discussed earlier; a desire to gain increased U.S. and Soviet military assistance by becoming a part of their anti-China campaign; a desire to "achieve hegemony in Asia" by using anti-China activities to increase India's status with poor and small countries of the Third World; a desire to divert class and national contradictions with India," quoted in Garver, "China's Decision for War with India in 1962," 120.

elite forces stationed in the southwestern region had all led Nehru to believe that China could “only bark but not bite.”⁴⁰⁹ Mao was satisfied with this assessment and encouraged Lei to give a more detailed analysis. Lei further reported that since 1950 the Chinese government had again and again tolerated and conciliated India’s policy of expansion; the Chinese didn’t strike back when the Indians occupied China’s territory in the middle⁴¹⁰ and eastern sector, even when they killed and wounded Chinese personnel while establishing their posts. China’s policy of forbearance had led Nehru to assert that the Chinese were weak and easy to bully. Hence, he became more and more defiant and crazier and crazier to gain the cost-free benefits he imagined on the Sino-Indian border by attacking and pressing the Chinese.⁴¹¹ Then, Mao nodded with satisfaction and said:

It seems like it is indeed that sort of a situation. In this case, we cannot but fight a war. Well, since Nehru says we only “bark but don’t bite,” we absolutely must fight. We have no other choice. We might as well accompany him [in fighting a war].⁴¹²

This conversation indicates that in addition to Nehru’s statement calling for war, the violent behavior of the Indians also seemed to convince Mao that China’s policy of forbearance could no longer solve the dispute. Moreover, as Lei pointed out, China’s forbearance fed Indian ambitions and even encouraged the Indians to act violently on the borders. Needless to say, Mao agreed completely with Lei’s analysis that India’s escalating violence, including shooting at, killing, and wounding Chinese soldiers, would not stop as China’s non-violent response prompted Indian misperception and miscalculation. The increasing violence may have helped Mao to identify a decision for war as the right decision to make in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating further.

Meanwhile, this conversation reveals that an assessment on the moral standing of the Indian government was made by Mao. In Mao’s opinion, the Sino-Indian border disputes could be solved peacefully. His policy and guidelines were consistent with this orientation. In other words, in Mao’s eyes China had always acted decently and even flawlessly in dealing with the border

⁴⁰⁹ Quoted in Garver’s translation in “China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,” 120.

⁴¹⁰ In Chinese recognition, this disputed sector includes the areas of Nelang, Dankhar, Gampa, Kawirik, and Topidunga on the Himalaya Range.

⁴¹¹ The detail of this conversation between Lei and Mao please see Lei Yingfu, *Lei Yingfu’s Memoir*, 208-209.

⁴¹² Quoted in Garver’s translation in “China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,” 120; and the original paragraph can be found in Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 209.

disputes. When the Indian government rejected Beijing's suggestions for peaceful negotiations again and again, and further attempted to solve the dispute by force, Mao naturally would see that, compared to China's conciliatory, even appeasing position, the Indians' acts exposed their expansionism and were wrong and unrighteous. This inference can be supported by Mao's use of the terms "truculent" (*xiong*, 兇) and "savage" (*changkuang*, 猖狂) in describing Nehru's behavior. These negative terms reveal a metaphor criticizing unwarranted behavior that far oversteps the bounds of propriety.

Mao's appreciation of Lei's analysis of the roots of India's aggressive advances tells us more about the ideas applied to judge the moral standing of the Indians. Mao agreed with Lei's report that India's aggressive advance was premised on the belief that international and domestic circumstances prevented China from making a tough and substantial response. This presupposition led the Indian leaders to believe that China could only "bark but not bite," as Lei and Mao put it. In other words, Mao would agree that India was profiting at China's expense, especially when China was in a difficult situation. There is an ancient Chinese proverb saying, "It is not benevolence to take advantage of someone's difficulties (趁人之危，非仁也)."⁴¹³ It is safe to say that when Mao agreed that the Indians were engaging in such behavior, at the same time he was implying that they were engaging in improper behavior against China. This perception brought Mao to the next judgment that India was seeking its own aggrandizement by bullying a weak neighbor. Mao agreed that China's restrained response together with the Indians' assumptions had led them to believe that China was weak-kneed and vulnerable to bullying. Based on this recognition, India's bullying would likely be increasingly unrestrained and would not stop spontaneously, because, as Mao and Lei speculated, it was a very "profitable business" to stay tough against a China that would not fight back anyway. Thus, for China, a decision for war would be the right thing to punish the bullying. The same sort of idea can also be found in the ancient classic the *Rites of Zhou*, which suggests that punishment of a bullying neighbor and exploiter of the weak is permissible.

The justifications of self-defense and stopping violence in particular were stressed by Mao to legitimate his decision, when the Politburo discussed the final decision on October 18. That

⁴¹³ See *The Book of the Later Han* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982), Volume Fifty Eight: Biography of Gai Xun.

was an enlarged Politburo conference, where Mao was the last person who made comments and concluded what the course of action should be. Mao said:

For many years we have adopted many methods to seek a peaceful solution on the Sino-Indian border issue, but India didn't accept [our efforts]. India intentionally provoked armed conflicts, which are getting stronger and stronger. [They] have pushed [us] too far (欺人太甚). Since Nehru wants such a fight, what we can do is to stay at the party until the end. "It is impolite not to reciprocate (來而不往非禮也)." As a proverb goes, no discord, no concord; maybe our counterstrike on one occasion could stabilize the border and promise to achieve a peaceful solution of the border issues. But our counterstrike will be merely a warning and punishment in nature that only informs Nehru and the Indian government that it is not allowed to settle the border issue by military measures.⁴¹⁴

After his conclusion, Mao asked Zhang Guohua, the commander of the Tibet Military Region, to assess the probability of winning the war. Zhang gave a positive answer. Then, Mao made an additional remark:

Maybe we cannot win [the war]. [If so, then] we will have nothing to say. When we cannot defeat [our opponent], we shouldn't blame everyone and everything except ourselves, all we can blame is our inability [to win the war]. The worst result will be nothing but to allow India to occupy our Tibet. But Tibet is China's sacred territory...that will never be changed. Someday, we will take it back.⁴¹⁵

Mao again showed the train of thought that it was not China's responsibility but the behavior of India, which kept rejecting China's efforts at peaceful resolution and redoubling its efforts to seize Chinese territories, that forced China to choose war. China, in Mao's words, had made every effort to seek a peaceful resolution, but all of its efforts had encountered deadlock because of the Indian government's hard-line policy. The purpose of the war, as Mao reasoned, was to stabilize the border and to create favorable conditions for negotiation. But Mao immediately entangled these just causes with the logic of punishment by saying that the war should be a warning and a punishment. This entanglement indicates that for Mao the decision for war was not only a pragmatic response to India's military action, but also an act of judgment with China possessing a superior moral status to impose punishment upon India.

In addition to the function of legitimizing the decision, the concept of righteous war may have helped Mao to shift his mind-set from the deliberative to the implemental according to the records of his moves in October, 1950. His instruction of October 6 marks the start of the shift. It

⁴¹⁴ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 7, vol. 2: 114.

⁴¹⁵ Lei Yingfu, *Zai zuigaotongshuaibu dang canmou*, 210.

appears that the shift was completed when Mao heard Lei's report on October 16, because he accepted the decision for war. As the conversation indicates, Mao applied ideas similar to the concept of righteous war to determine the legitimacy of the decision for war. Mao's mind-set shift occurred simultaneously with his legitimizing the decision for war. Moreover, by agreeing with Lei's analysis, Mao revealed that India's ceaseless violence, resulting from the misperception that China would not strike back in any case, was the most important cause leading him to his decision. This suggests that the consideration of stopping the Indian violence may have been the catalytic agent in the shifting Mao's mind-sets.

Zhou Enlai

During the period of Sino-Indian conflict, Zhou was acting as a significant bridge between China and its foreign counterparts. Because of the characteristics of that role, Zhou's tone tended to be prudent, cooperative, and flexible in seeking a peaceful resolution with India. Although Zhou remained friendly and flexible to some extent in his communication with the Indians, this is not to say that Zhou opposed the decision for war against India; rather Zhou was playing a secondary role. In the final stage of decision-making, his endorsement of the use of offensive force had a catalytic effect upon other leaders. According to his accounts after the outbreak of the Sino-Indian war, Zhou had treated the conflict as a war of self-defense against India's invasion. And compared to Mao, it seems that Zhou tended more to regard it as a war for stopping the Indian violence.

Like Mao, Zhou initially believed that the Sino-Indian border dispute could be solved by peaceful means. Zhou thought that the patterns of China's negotiation with other South and Southeast Asian states, especially Burma, could contribute a workable model for resolving the Sino-Indian disputes. In his talks with U Nu, Myanmar's Premier, Zhou said: "We can tell you frankly that we can absolutely resolve the Sino-Indian border problems based on the principles resolving the Sino-Burmese border issues."⁴¹⁶ For Zhou, the unresolved problem was not any lack of Chinese sincerity in negotiating no sound principle but "the Indian government's dissent on those principles."⁴¹⁷ The result of the meetings between Zhou and Nehru in 1960 testified to

⁴¹⁶ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 305

⁴¹⁷ Ibid.

this view. During the talks, Zhou implicitly proposed a mutual compromise involving a “reciprocal acceptance of present realities in both sectors.”⁴¹⁸ But the proposal was rejected by the Indians. Zhou was very disappointed by the Indian government’s response to his proposal, otherwise he would not have held an impromptu press conference to state Beijing’s position just before leaving New Delhi.

Generally speaking, Zhou retained a relatively moderate and flexible tone in dealing with the clashes that occurred on the border due to India’s Forward Policy. But even Zhou had his bottom line. In July 1962, Zhou seemed to recognize that the Indians would not stop advancing voluntarily and that the use of force might be a major option on China’s list. Liu Shaoqi and Zhou’s report to Mao offered this same opinion. They reported two options – to expel the Indian troops by force or to expel them with any method but force – and Mao chose the latter. By October 5, 1962, Zhou had started to favor the option of use of force when he received the report indicating that a massive Indian assault would be launched on the McMahon Line, which meant the end of the last hope for a peaceful resolution.

Like Mao’s, Zhou’s attitude toward the Indian actions along the borders became tougher and tougher after October 6 when the Indians rejected Beijing’s final proposal for unconditional negotiations. On October 8, Zhou notified the Soviet ambassador to China that the Indian government might launch a large-scale attack in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian border. Zhou stated that the Chinese had always taken a forbearing attitude toward India’s moves; except for self-defense, the Chinese never launched an attack or assault and had never fired the first shot when the Indians invaded China’s territory and killed and wounded Chinese soldiers. In Zhou’s words, China persisted in forbearance even when the Indians pushed too far (*bi dao tou shang*, 逼到頭上). Those forbearing attitudes, according to Zhou, led the Indians to believe that they could “insult” the Chinese and get away with it. Zhou informed the Soviet ambassador that now the Indian government was preparing to attack the Chinese with two brigades; therefore, once the Indians launched their attack, the Chinese would resolutely defend themselves.⁴¹⁹ Zhou asserted that “Nehru will not give up the thought of a Great Indian Empire and the position to invade [China].” With regard to China’s response, Zhou said: “Only [when we launch] a counterstrike

⁴¹⁸ John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001), 100.

⁴¹⁹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 502.

for self-defense and progressively isolate him can [we] let him withdraw after learning of difficulties, or temporarily mitigate [his ambition].”⁴²⁰ Thus, in order to stabilize the situation on the border and stop the possible conflict resulting from Nehru’s ambitions, Zhou believed that China had to strike against India “in a big fashion”; otherwise “it would not make a significant change.”⁴²¹ In other words, Zhou’s notification suggested that the Chinese had decided to stop violence with violence, if the Indians would not stop their violence against the Chinese.

Zhou’s suggestion at the enlarged politburo conference of October 18 provides another clue to explore the application of the CRWT in Zhou’s consideration of the decision for war. Zhou first gave an analysis of the situation on the Sino-Indian border. Then, he emphasized that the reason why the Chinese troops had not crossed the McMahon Line in the past was that China wanted to negotiate with India; but since India had broken the tacit understanding regarding the McMahon Line as the actual line of control between China and India, China had no reason to constrain itself to observe that understanding. Zhou suggested that all things considered, China had no choice but to launch a self-defensive counterstrike.⁴²²

The above records show only that the ideas of the CRWT may have helped Zhou legitimize China’s decision to go to war against India. This finding is mainly due to the lack of sources providing detailed records of Zhou’s activities before the Sino-Indian War. Yet, Zhou’s remarks do show that the identification of just cause occurred when Zhou was making the determination for war after India rejected China’s final proposal for negotiation of October 6. But this finding is not sufficient to prove the influence of the CRWT on the shift of Zhou’s mind-set.

Other leaders

During the period of Sino-Indian border disputes, Liu Bocheng, a PLA marshal and one of China’s top military leaders, was leading a team analyzing and planning strategy under the CMC. His remarks can be taken to represent the viewpoint of this team as well as the CMC. Although Liu’s team was in charge of broad work on strategic studies for the nation, it contributed several important plans and suggestions about preparation and deployment before the war. Liu’s team offered important information and suggestions to Mao for assessing the situation and

⁴²⁰ Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1567.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

⁴²² *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 7, vol. 2: 114.

recommending conduct for dealing with the dispute. Perhaps because of the nature of his mission, Liu didn't express any thought other than pragmatic calculation. However, it can be asserted that Liu became aware in May 1962 that war between China and India was a real possibility, and he especially instructed the Tibet Military Region to make good preparations. Also, Liu's instruction to the border forces tells us a little about his perspective toward the war with India. As he said, "This business is a great matter, directly related to national and military prestige; we have to fight well."⁴²³

The works of Luo Ruiqing can also be taken to represent opinions from the General Staff. After learning of the Indian moves in the western sector, Luo ordered Lei Yingfu to investigate the situation:

You go to have a look, [to see] if the Indian nibbling operation will stop or not. If it will not stop, [then] what shall we do? When the necessary time for fighting comes, [we] have to fight...the department of operations is not the department of concessions, we have to prepare well. But before Chairman Mao makes his decision, [we] will not allow any shot to be fired, without exception. If the Center prepares to launch a counterstrike, and we are not ready, then we will all be guilty of [hurting] our nation.⁴²⁴

After Mao made his decision on October 18, Luo drafted a telegram to the border forces with the same tone as Liu Bocheng's words: "This operation is related to national and military prestige. You must win the first battle, you have to fight well, and are not allowed to fight poorly."⁴²⁵ Like Liu, Luo had noticed that the possibility of conflict between China and India had become more and more real. Although Luo's instruction seems hawkish, as a soldier he did not join in the decision-making but only acted as a well-prepared executor of orders from above.

Overall, both generals' statements illustrate that the ideas of the CRWT played little part in influencing the military leaders' attitude toward the decision to go to war against the Indians. This may have resulted from the positions Liu and Luo held at that time, which required them to pay more attention to the task itself rather than the political consideration of the decision.

⁴²³ Huang Yao and Zhang Mingzhe eds., *Luo Ruiqing zhuan* (A Biography of Luo Ruiqing) (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House, 1994), 382-383.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 377-378.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 378.

Analysis of the *People's Daily*

There are a total of 203 days of reporting to be observed in the case of the Sino-Indian War in 1962. The period starts from April 1 and lasts until October 20 when the People's Liberation Army (PLA) launched its counterstrike against the Indian troops. Selecting April 1, 1962, as the starting day of observation is arbitrary. But it is a reasonable option, because it was late in March and early in April when the Chinese government came to recognize the Indian government's insistence on implementing its Forward Policy in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border. I focus on the reports about Indian actions along the Sino-Indian border in the *People's Daily* as the objects to be observed. There are a total of 69 instances in this period when Chinese officials issued moral condemnations of India. The average daily rate is 0.339, which ranks last in the frequency of use of moral condemnation among the five cases.

September 8, 1962, is the date set for the watershed dividing the period of observation in the case of the Sino-Indian War. The Chinese government responded to the Indian government's military action in the western sector of the Sino-Indian border with restraint until September 8 when Beijing learned that the Indian troops had advanced at Che Dong, an area north of the McMahon Line – the actual line of control for both sides. To the Chinese, the presence of an Indian force at Che Dong meant an invasion of China. In this analysis, the daily averages for the two sub-periods are 0.149 and 1.071 respectively.

The second analysis shows that the Chinese government evidently increased its morality-based condemnation of India after September 8, 1962. This variation is congruent with my assumption that an increased frequency of morality-based condemnation will occur in a case with the result of a decision for war. This finding suggests that the Chinese government was attempting to showcase the legitimacy of its decision by highlighting the moral inferiority of the Indians.

Conclusion

My assumption about the influence of the CRWT is rather moderately supported by the evidence resulting from this case. According to the statements and comments made by the PRC leaders, Mao was the most noticeable leader applying the ideas of righteous war to legitimize his decision for war against the Indians. Mao not only legitimized his decision by pointing to the justifications of self-defense and stopping violence, but also assigned a status of moral inferiority

to the Indian behavior. In addition, the CRWT may also have functioned as an intervening factor triggering the shift of Mao's mind-sets. Compared to the records with regard to Mao, those for Zhou suggest that the ideas of righteous war functioned mostly as a frame of reference to legitimize the decision to go to war. Additionally, the findings from the generals indicate that the issue of morality or righteousness was not a part of their thinking about the decision for war.

While the remarks of the leaders do not provide an especially compelling result, the analysis of the *People's Daily* supports my assumption about the Chinese government's use of morality-based condemnation. The frequency of Beijing's morality-based condemnation evidently increased after the Chinese learned of the Indian troops advancing at Che Dong. China's leaders also expressed their concerns about righteous causes when they were pondering the decision to attack the Indians. This suggests that the use of morality-based condemnation was more than a "moral cloak" in this case. This result agrees with my hypothesis that a Chinese decision for war is likely to occur when China attempts to manifest the legitimacy of its use of force by highlighting the moral inferiority of its opponents.

Chapter 6 - China's Response to U.S. Escalation in Vietnam, 1964-1965

In the Vietnam War, as did in the Korean War, the PRC offered assistance to a neighbor to defend against attacks from a foreign state. Considered in light of the CRWT, the Chinese used the same righteousness-based justification in both the Vietnam War and the Korean War, namely helping a weak state to resist a strong state's invasion. The Chinese offered a considerable quantity of material and a large number of "volunteer" units to their Vietnamese ally, especially between 1964 and 1969.⁴²⁶ Chinese engineering units constructed and maintained numerous traffic routes and airfields in North Vietnam, and Chinese antiaircraft artillery units shouldered the chief responsibility for defending sensitive areas in the northern part of Vietnam.⁴²⁷ However, the Chinese did not enter the war, as they did in the Korean War, by sending a large number of combat troops to help their Vietnamese comrades fight against the U.S. troops deployed in South Vietnam. This case offers a good clue to explore how the Chinese could respond differently when the righteous cause for war is the same. The clue lies in the period between late 1964 and early 1965 when the United States escalated the war and China's leaders made the decision to aid their Vietnamese ally.

Historical Background, 1964-1965

The turning point in the escalation during the Vietnam War was between August 1964 and early 1965, when President Johnson made a series of decisions to increase the U.S. military commitment to South Vietnam. After the Gulf of Tonkin incident between August 2 and 4, 1964, President Johnson requested a Congressional resolution that gave him authority to expand military measures to support the defense of South Vietnam.⁴²⁸ Meanwhile, President Johnson ordered a retaliatory air strike, Operation Pierce Arrow, against North Vietnam on August 5. The U.S. Congress passed the resolution Johnson requested, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, on

⁴²⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 221-229.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

⁴²⁸ Lyndon Baines Johnson, "Report on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident (August 4, 1964)," Miller Center of Public Affairs at University of Virginia, April 25, 2012, <http://millercenter.org/scripps/archive/speeches/detail/3998>.

August 7, giving him broad authority to carry out all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against American forces and to prevent further aggression in Southeast Asia.⁴²⁹

The development of the conflict in Vietnam had been a focus of Beijing's foreign policy before the Gulf of Tonkin incident. Between 1954 and 1963 Beijing was closely involved in Hanoi's policy against foreign intervention and offered considerable military and economic aid to its Vietnamese comrades.⁴³⁰ According to Qiang Zhai's research, in 1965 Beijing seems to have made an agreement with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) that the Chinese government would send combat troops to shoulder the duty of defending North Vietnam if U.S. ground troops crossed the 17th parallel.⁴³¹ During the first half of 1964, Beijing and Hanoi held several meetings to discuss and plot strategies to deal with the developing situation. By the end of July 1964, Beijing decided to offer to cooperate closely with Hanoi to fight against an even greater U.S. intervention.⁴³²

The Gulf of Tonkin incident led the Chinese government to become more actively involved in North Vietnamese strategy-making and to prepare for war on the southern borders of China. On August 8th, Zhou Enlai and Luo Ruiqing cabled Ho Chi Minh, Pham Van Dong, and Van Tien Dung to recommend that they "investigate and clarify the situation, discuss and formulate proper strategies and policies, and be ready to take action."⁴³³ That same night, the PLA General Staff asked the PLA Air Force and Navy to enter readiness posture and decided to reinforce the air defenses in the areas of Guangxi, Yunnan, and Hainan Island.⁴³⁴ When Le Duan secretly visited Mao in Beijing on 13 August, Mao expressed his opinion about the probability of

⁴²⁹ Michael H. Hunt, ed., *A Vietnam War Reader: A Documentary History from American and Vietnamese Perspectives* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 67.

⁴³⁰ Qiang Zhai, "Beijing and the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1965: New Chinese Evidence," *CWIHP Bulletin*, nos. 6-7 (Winter 1995), 234.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun* (The People's Liberation Army during the Cultural Revolution) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi ziliao, 1989), 408; James G. Hershberg and Chen Jian, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy: China's Signals to the United States about the Vietnam in 1965," *The International History Review* 27, no.1 (Mar. 2005): 61.

⁴³⁴ Xu Yan, *Liushinian guoshi jiyao: Junshi juan* (The Summary of National Affairs for Sixty Years: Volume Military Affairs) (Hunan: Hunan Renmin Chubanshe, 2009), 261.

escalation. Mao thought that neither Beijing and Hanoi nor Washington wanted to fight a war at that time; thus it was unlikely that there would be a war. When Le Duan's colleagues said that the U.S. was making noise about a possible future attack on North Vietnam, Mao guaranteed that Beijing would support Hanoi and make it public, if North Vietnam were under U.S. attack.⁴³⁵ Another secret meeting between Mao and high-ranking North Vietnamese officials was held in Beijing on October 5th. At this meeting, Mao advised his Vietnamese comrades that the deployment of North Vietnamese troops into South Vietnam should be carefully planned in order to avoid provoking the U.S. to expand the scale of conflict. In case the scenario of the movement of U.S. ground troops into North Vietnam happened, Mao suggested that Hanoi should construct defensive works along the coast and then preserve their main force by avoiding a direct confrontation with the Americans.⁴³⁶

Early 1965 witnessed a major escalation of the conflict in Vietnam when the U.S. launched Operation Flaming Dart and Operation Rolling Thunder to retaliate for North Vietnamese military actions crossing the 17th Parallel into South Vietnam. On March 8, the landing of two battalions of U.S. Marines at Danang deepened Beijing's concern about whether the U.S. intended to conduct a massive ground invasion into North Vietnam. Liu Shaoqi, the President of the PRC, guaranteed the DRV in a meeting on April 8 that the Chinese government would do its best to support Hanoi with whatever it needed.⁴³⁷ Although Beijing was willing to offer any kind of support to Hanoi, both the Chinese and Vietnamese agreed that China should avoid engaging in a direct confrontation with the U.S. at that time.⁴³⁸

In addition to offering its support, the Chinese government started to deliver a series of signals expressing Beijing's standpoint and attempting to warn the U.S. not to escalate the war in North Vietnam. On March 25, Chen Yi, the Foreign Minister of the PRC, announced that the Chinese people were ready and, if necessary, they would send their "personnel to fight together

⁴³⁵ Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 62; and Odd Arne Westad, Chen Jian, Stein Tønneson, Nguyen Vu Tung and James G. Hershberg eds., *77 Conversations Between Chinese and Foreign Leaders on the Wars in Indochina, 1964-1977*, CWIHP Working Paper No. 22, (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1998) (Hereafter *77 Conversations*), 72, footnote 117.

⁴³⁶ *77 Conversations*, 72-74.

⁴³⁷ *77 Conversations*, 83; Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 415

⁴³⁸ Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 63.

with the Vietnamese people to annihilate the American aggressors.”⁴³⁹ Zhou Enlai expressed similar assurances during his visit to Albania.⁴⁴⁰ Beijing’s most carefully crafted signal since the escalation of the U.S intervention was revealed during Zhou’s trip to Pakistan, where he had a private conversation with Ayub Khan, the President of Pakistan. Zhou attempted to convey to Washington, through Ayub Khan, Beijing’s four principles for handling the Vietnam conflict. Ayub Khan was supposed to visit the U.S. later that month.⁴⁴¹ However, his trip to the U.S. was postponed by President Johnson in mid-April. This postponement led Johnson unwittingly to lose the opportunity to receive a firsthand message revealing Beijing’s intentions in Vietnam.⁴⁴² Doubtful that the message would be conveyed, and given the signs of the imminent escalation of war in Vietnam, Beijing decided to utilize other channels to deliver its message to Washington.⁴⁴³ Zhou expressed the same message in his speech of April 20 and in his talks with Subandrio, the Indonesian foreign minister, on May 28.⁴⁴⁴ None of those channels accomplished a successful communication with Washington.

When Beijing recognized that those channels were failing to work effectively, the Chinese government decided to use an unusual channel, the British, to convey its message to the U.S. On May 31, Donald Hopson, British *chargé d'affaires* in Beijing, was received by Chen Yi, who attempted to deliver Beijing’s four-point message during their meeting. After the conversation, the message was reported to London by Hopson and then passed to Washington through the British diplomatic system. On June 7, Hopson told the Chinese that Beijing’s message had been conveyed to Washington. After learning that their message had reached Washington, China’s leaders gradually became more confident that the risk of a direct confrontation between China

⁴³⁹ *The People’s Daily*, March 25, 1965; Hershberg and Chen, “Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy,” 65; and Xu Yan, *Liushinian guoshi jiyao: Junshi juan*, 262.

⁴⁴⁰ Hershberg and Chen, “Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy,” 65.

⁴⁴¹ Qiang Zhai, “Beijing and the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1965,” 235; and Hershberg and Chen, “Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy,” 65-67. The four points were: a) China would not take the initiative to provoke a war against the U.S.; b) the Chinese meant what they say, and China will honor whatever international obligations it has undertaken; c) China is prepared; and d) if the U.S. expand the war to China, it will really suffer. These four points will be repeated and discussed in the section of Zhou Enlai in this chapter.

⁴⁴² Hershberg and Chen, “Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy,” 69.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 69-70; and *77conversations*, 85-86.

and the U.S. had been reduced.⁴⁴⁵ The successful delivery of Beijing's four principles for handling the Vietnam conflict not only led the Americans to discern the Chinese intentions in Vietnam, but also helped reassure the Chinese that there was little danger of a direct Sino-American confrontation in which China might be attacked by the U.S.

In addition to communication with the U.S., the North Vietnamese plan for using Chinese support was another factor that prevented Beijing from engaging in a Korean War-style conflict in Vietnam. After the Gulf of Tonkin incident, the Chinese government guaranteed its Vietnamese comrades that China would offer full support, including the dispatch of combat units to Vietnam, if it were requested. The agreement concerning Chinese support to North Vietnam, after several high-level contacts between Beijing and Hanoi, was achieved in a meeting in early June 1965. According to the discussion, the Vietnamese proposed that, "if the war remained in its current conditions, the DRV would fight the war by itself and China would provide various kinds of support as the North Vietnamese needed"; "if the United States used its navy and air force to support a South Vietnamese attack on the north, China would also provide naval and air force support to the DRV"; and "if U.S. ground forces were directly used to attack the north, China would use its land forces as strategic reserves for the DRV and conduct military operations whenever necessary."⁴⁴⁶ With the regard to a possible coordinated plan for the deployment of the Chinese land force, Hanoi suggested two options — that the Chinese troops either help to strengthen the North Vietnamese defensive position in order to create conditions for a counteroffensive, or launch an offensive to disrupt the enemy's deployment and gain the strategic initiative.⁴⁴⁷ Luo Ruiqing, the Chinese representative at the meeting, concluded that "we are already prepared, [the decision] is up to you, whenever you want us to go [there], we will go [by your decision]...the power of command is yours, we only dispatch personnel to offer support."⁴⁴⁸ The Chinese attitude was clear that it was completely up to Hanoi whether the

⁴⁴⁵ Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 71-78.

⁴⁴⁶ Quoted in Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 134; the original Chinese version see Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 417.

⁴⁴⁷ Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*, 134; and Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 417

⁴⁴⁸ Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 417

Chinese should engage in a Korean War-style intervention in Vietnam or not. At no point during the Vietnam War did Hanoi ever ask Beijing to provide such support for launching an offensive against the U.S. troops in Vietnam. Perhaps, this is because the survival of North Vietnam was never threatened by a massive U.S. ground invasion.⁴⁴⁹ Another consideration is that the leaders of DRV, who worried about the expansion of Chinese influence in their territory, were reluctant to let the Chinese become deeply involved in the conflict.⁴⁵⁰

Analysis of Leaders

Mao Zedong

China was encountering an unfavorable international environment in the mid-1960s. On the east side of China, Taiwan and the United States had engaged in a prolonged confrontation with Beijing since the outbreak of Korean War; the worsening of the Sino-Soviet split imposed a threat from the north; and there was no sign in the south to show the tension between China and India was receding, despite the fact that the Sino-Indian war had ended several years before. These situations plus the newly emerging situation in Vietnam, where the U.S. intention to intervene was becoming clearer and clearer, drove Mao to pay more attention to the issues of China's security and preparation for war.⁴⁵¹ The greatest concern for Mao was the possibility of a major war and China's preparedness for it. He said: "Things in this world always turn out this way, when you are ill-prepared, the enemy comes; and when you are prepared, on the contrary the enemy does not dare to come."⁴⁵² The concern about the possibility of a major war didn't

⁴⁴⁹ The Johnson administration saw its primary task in Vietnam in 1965 as persuading the DRV to stop support of the insurgency in South Vietnam, and to accomplish that goal by gradually escalating the application of air power and ground forces without threatening the destruction of North Vietnam itself. See George C. Herring, *LBJ and Vietnam War: A Different Kind of War* (Texas: The University of Texas Press, 1994), 7-8; and Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), chs. 6 and 11.

⁴⁵⁰ About the North Vietnamese sentiment of declining to use all elements of Chinese support see Qiang Zhai, "Beijing and the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1965," 241-242.

⁴⁵¹ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1347; and Jin Chongji ed., *Zhou Enlai zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1767-1768.

⁴⁵² Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1347.

alter Mao's support for North Vietnam against the U.S. On June 23, 1964, when Mao received a group of Chilean journalists, he said:

China wants peace. Whoever supports peace, we will agree with. We don't agree with having a war. But those wars of oppressed people fighting against imperialists we will support...As for the war of the South Vietnamese people fighting against the American imperialists, we will also support it.⁴⁵³

This remark was not the first time Mao expressed support for his Vietnamese comrades in their fight against the U.S. His expressions of this sort can probably be traced back to 1963, when Beijing and Hanoi had achieved a preliminary agreement about the conditions for China to intervene in the Vietnam conflict. According to research by Chinese scholars, by 1963 the high-ranking leaders of both parties had reached a consensus that, if the U.S. invaded North Vietnam, China would dispatch its forces to execute a coordinated military action with the North Vietnamese forces to fight against the invasion.⁴⁵⁴ Although there is no evidence showing that Mao had personally participated in the early discussions, taking the operation of the PRC's power structure into account, he certainly would have known and approved of the consensus achieved by both parties.

Mao expressed his support again right before the Gulf of Tonkin incident, when the signs of the U.S. expanding its intervention in Vietnam became more and more obvious. On June 24, 1964, when Mao received General Van Tien Dung, he said: "If the United States risks taking the war to North Vietnam, Chinese troops should cross the border [to enter the war]." Mao further suggested that "It is better for our troops to be [called] volunteers."⁴⁵⁵ Mao also encouraged his Vietnamese comrades not to be afraid of the U.S. intention to expand the scale of its intervention. Mao said "The more you fear the Americans, the more they will bully you... You should not fear, you should fight... In my opinion, the less you fear [the Americans], the less they will dare to

⁴⁵³ *Jianguo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* (Selected Works of the Important Documents since the Founding of the People's Republic of China) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1992-1998), vol. 18: 576

⁴⁵⁴ Qiang Zhai, "Beijing and the Vietnam Conflict, 1964-1965," 234; Yang Kuison, "Mao Zedong yu yinduzhina zhanzheng" (Mao Zedong and the Indochina Wars), in *Zhongguo yu yinduzhina zhanzheng* (China and the Indochina Wars), ed. Li Danhui (Hong Kong: Cosmos Books, 2000), 42

⁴⁵⁵ Li Danhui, "Zhongsu guanxi yu zhongguo de yuanyue kangmei" (The Sino-Soviet Relationship and China's Policy of Aiding Vietnam and Resisting America), *Dangdai zhongguoshi yanjiu* (Research on Contemporary Chinese History), No.3 (1998): 112; Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*, 131; and Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 208-9

bully you.”⁴⁵⁶ Mao’s tone was indeed belligerent, but he didn’t forget to reassure the Vietnamese, who were uneasy about the escalation of the conflict, by saying:

Our two parties and two countries must cooperate and fight the enemy together. Your business is my business and my business is your business. In other words, our two sides must deal with the enemy together without condition.⁴⁵⁷

A clearer expression of the conditions for China’s use of force in the coming conflict appeared on July 27 when Mao received Tran Tu Bihn, the DRV ambassador to China. During their conversation, Mao said:

Don’t be afraid of the U.S. intervention, it is no more than another “Korean War.” Chinese troops are ready; if the U.S. takes a risk to attack North Vietnam, Chinese troops will move over there. Our troops have wanted to go to war. The Americans need to think that Chinese are not without legs. The Americans can dispatch their troops. Cannot Chinese also dispatch our troops? From our country to your country, we take one step and are already there.⁴⁵⁸

These records show that before the Gulf of Tonkin incident Mao had assured his support for dispatching Chinese troops to Vietnam if they were needed. Especially in his remark of July 27,

⁴⁵⁶ Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War*, 208-9

⁴⁵⁷ Xue Mouhong and Pei Jianzhang, *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao* (The Contemporary Chinese Diplomacy) (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1988), 159; Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars, 1950-1975*, 131.

⁴⁵⁸ Yang Kuison, “Mao Zedong yu yinduzhina zhanzheng,” 4. Chinese scholars provide different versions of the context of this quotation. Chen Jian’s quotation is: “We must be prepared. Both Vietnam and China must be prepared. If they [the Americans] start bombing or landing operation [against North Vietnam], we will fight them...If the United States attacks North Vietnam, that is not just your problem. They will have to remember that we Chinese also have legs. The American can dispatch their troops. Cannot we Chinese also dispatch our troops? From our country to your country, we take one step and we are already there.” In the same book presenting Yang’s article, Li Danhui has another quotation: “If the Americans bomb North Vietnam or land on North Vietnam, we [Chinese] will fight. Our troops have wanted to go to war. They [the Americans] need to think, that Chinese are not without legs. The Americans can dispatch their troops. Cannot Chinese also dispatch our troops? From our country to your country, we take one step and are ready there.” The biggest difference amongst these quotations is whether Mao said that “Our troops have wanted to go to war.” Chen stated that his quotation is from the Chinese Central Archive. Yang and Li have no detailed reference showing which archive includes the quotation. Given to Yang and Li’s positions, senior researchers of the Chinese Academy of Social Science, both of them would certainly have qualification to access the Chinese Central Archive as well; but because of political correctness, they might be less willing to give a detailed reference to their sources, especially for those documents still classified. Although I adopt Yang’s quotation, the whole picture of Mao’s conversation can only be explored by referring to all of those three versions.

1964, Mao defined the situation that would trigger a Chinese intervention in the Vietnam conflict as a U.S. attack on North Vietnam.

August 13, 1964, was the first time Mao expressed his thoughts about the U.S. escalation in Vietnam after the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. In his talks with Le Duan, Mao asserted:

It seems that the Americans do not want to fight a war, you do not want to fight a war, and we do not necessarily want to fight a war. As none of the three sides wants to fight a war, the war will not happen.⁴⁵⁹

When Le Duan said that the U.S. was making “noise” about escalating the war, Mao replied, “if the United States attacks the North, they will have to remember that the Chinese also have legs, and legs are used for walking.” He further proposed that China would openly redeploy its air and land forces to the south of China in order to respond to the U.S. threats.⁴⁶⁰

These remarks appear to confirm that Mao’s premise for Chinese intervention was more influenced by pragmatic calculation at this stage. His purpose in uttering this expression may explain why the element of righteous judgment is lacking, as it served mainly for reassuring the North Vietnamese leaders of China’s commitment. Additionally, Mao’s perception of the likelihood of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam, presented in his talks with Le Duan on August 13, suggests that the need to assess the decision for war was not pressing at that time.

However, Mao’s public announcements in September of 1964 appeared in a different formulation with strong judgmental language condemning the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. In his congratulatory telegram on the 19th Anniversary of the Founding of the DRV on September 1, 1964, Mao wrote:

Recently, the American imperialists have launched a military action invading the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, which is a premeditated provocation expanding the scale of war in Indochina. Since the American imperialists adopted the step to expand the war in Indochina, neither should they expect the DRV to surrender its right of action to fight against invasion, nor should they expect all of the peace-loving countries and people to abandon their support for the DRV’s right of action to fight against invasion. The American imperialists have to answer for the serious crime that they committed in invading the DRV. The debt of blood they owe to the Vietnamese people needs to be paid.... Justice (正義) is totally on the side of the DRV. The Vietnamese self-defensive military struggle against the U.S. and the sanguinary rule of its running dog will win the final victory...China and Vietnam are close neighbors, which have a supportive relationship as between lips and

⁴⁵⁹ Hershberg and Chen, “Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy,” 61.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 62.

teeth, and stand together in times of need. The Chinese people greatly appreciate the increasing consolidation and development of great unity and militant friendship between China and Vietnam (DRV).⁴⁶¹

This public speech was also the first time Mao identified the moral standing of the U.S., whose acts were described as a “serious crime.” Although Mao proclaimed that justice was on the side of North Vietnam, he did not go on to declare that China also possessed the moral authority to intervene in the conflict if necessary. Moreover, Mao’s commitment to intervention was also vague in this speech. This may be a result of Mao’s intention to limit the scope of conflict, as he divulged in his conversation with Pham Van Dong on October 5.

In that conversation, Mao began:

According to Comrade Le Duan, you had the plan to dispatch a division [to the South]. Probably you have not dispatched that division yet. When should you dispatch it, the timing is important. Whether or not the United States will attack the North, it has not yet made the decision. Now, it [the U.S.] is not even in a position to resolve the problem in South Vietnam. If it attacks the North, [it may need to] fight for one hundred years, and its legs will be trapped there. Therefore, it needs to consider carefully. The Americans have made all kinds of scary statements. They claim that they will run after [you], and will chase into your country, and that they will attack our air force. In my opinion, the meaning of these words is that they do not want us to fight a big war, and that [they do not want] our air force to attack their warships. If [we] do not attack their warships, they will not run after you. Isn’t this what they mean? The Americans have something to hide.⁴⁶²

Pham Van Dong agreed, saying:

This is also our thinking. The United States is facing many difficulties, and it is not easy for it to expand the war. Therefore, our consideration is that we should try to restrict the war in South Vietnam to the sphere of special war, and should try to defeat the enemy within the sphere of special war. We should try our best not to let the U.S. imperialists turn the war in South Vietnam into a limited war, and try our best not to let the war be expanded to North Vietnam. We must adopt a very skillful strategy, and should not provoke it [the U.S.]. Our Politburo has made a decision on this matter, and today I am reporting it to Chairman Mao. We believe that this is workable.⁴⁶³

Right after learning of the Vietnamese plan and concerns, Mao answered: “Yes.” Then, they continued to discuss the scenario of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam. Mao proposed a strategy of protracted war to his Vietnamese comrades for dealing with that situation:

If the Americans dare to take the risk to bring the war to the North, how should the invasion be dealt with? I have discussed this issue with Comrade Le Duan. [First], of course, it is necessary to construct defensive

⁴⁶¹ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 11: 152-53.

⁴⁶² *77 Conversations*, 72.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

works along the coast. The best way is to construct defensive works like the ones [we had constructed] during the Korean War, so that you may prevent the enemy from entering the inner land. Second, however, if the Americans are determined to invade the inner land, you may allow them to do so. You should pay attention to your strategy. You must not engage your main force in a head-to-head confrontation with them, and must well maintain your main force. My opinion is that so long as the green mountain is there, how can you ever lack firewood?⁴⁶⁴

This conversation implies three main elements of Mao's thinking about the Vietnam conflict and U.S. intentions at that time. First, Mao regarded the chance of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam as still small, even though it could not entirely be ignored. Second, Mao agreed that the scope of war should be limited to South Vietnam by using a skillful strategy without provoking the U.S. This thought was not enunciated by Mao himself, but he did express agreement with it. Third, Mao seemed to prefer that a Korean War-style Chinese intervention should be the last option to be considered. This does not mean that Mao had completely abandoned his commitment to support North Vietnam, but rather it shows that Mao preferred to let Hanoi strive for winning the war first. Then, if the North Vietnamese efforts failed, the Chinese could offer a Korean War-style intervention in response to their call for help, especially in the event they encountered a massive U.S. invasion of North Vietnam.

A clearer identification of the legitimacy of China's decision to go to war was not seen until January 9, 1965, when Mao received Edgar Snow, a Kansas City-born American journalist who had long enjoyed a good relationship with the Chinese communists. In their conversation, Snow broached the issue of China's attitude toward the Vietnam conflict by mentioning his assumption that a Sino-American major war was unlikely to occur. Mao agreed with Snow, and further emphasized that China would not cross the line to attack the U.S. Following up, Snow observed that the U.S. was often saying that the war in South Vietnam would be expanded to the north; but Mao seemed to doubt that it would do so, mentioning that Dean Rusk, the U.S. Secretary of State, had denied that the U.S. had any such intention. Then, Snow mentioned that the U.S. government didn't understand what the Chinese, especially Mao Zedong, thought of the Vietnam War. Mao replied:

⁴⁶⁴ 77 *Conversations*, 73-74.

How come [they] don't understand? We will not go [outside our border] to fight (打出去). Only if the United States came and attacked⁴⁶⁵ (打進來) would we fight. This point can be proved by history. Our country's hands are full for dealing with our own business. It is a crime to go [beyond the border] to fight, why shall we go [outside the border] to fight? South Vietnam simply does not need us to go there, they can handle the situation by themselves.

Snow also asked Mao's opinion about the U.S. proposal that China and North Vietnam give up the policy of aggression in Southeast Asia in exchange for U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam. Mao answered:

We have no such policy of aggression to abandon; we do not engage in an invasion. But China supports revolution, cannot help but to [do so]. Wherever revolution occurs, we will announce our statements and gather some rallies to support [the revolution]. What the imperialists dislike is that [sort of action]. We like to have empty talk, shoot blanks, but will that not dispatch forces. Shooting blanks, is it called aggression? For those who dispatch forces, on the contrary, will it not be called aggression?⁴⁶⁶

This conversation suggests that the issue of morality seemed to help Mao to identify premises legitimizing Chinese intervention in the conflict. Mao clearly indicated that in any case China would commit a crime if it sent its troops outside Chinese territory to attack its opponents – unless those opponents attacked first. China had no reason to commit such a crime. In other words, Mao may have believed that the use of force outside Chinese territory was morally prohibited behavior. But, in the case of the conflict in Vietnam, Mao further stated that a U.S. attack would give China the legitimacy to intervene in the conflict without it being regarded as a crime. This logic suggests that Mao may have applied a frame of reference based on the consideration of morality to distinguish what was the right decision for China to make in dealing with the conflict in Vietnam. However, Mao's location of the trigger for Chinese intervention was vague since he did not specifically indicate whether China could legitimately use force if North Vietnam, China, or both were attacked by the U.S. In other words, both the justification of self-defense and that of helping a weak state against a strong state's invasion could be regarded as the righteous causes. In addition, Mao's complaint about an international environment in which U.S. military actions in Vietnam would not be denounced as aggression while China's

⁴⁶⁵ In the original phrase, Mao did not specifically identify the object of this attack. Mao might have seen the target of the U.S. attack as China, North Vietnam, or both.

⁴⁶⁶ *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan*, 557-562.

possible intervention would be implies that Mao regarded the U.S. moves in Vietnam as improper behavior.

Another clue indicating how Mao could legitimize China's use of force in Vietnam can be found in a draft of the instruction to prepare for war sent to Mao by the Central Committee of the CCP on April 10, 1965. It is worth noting that this report was produced after the Johnson administration launched Operation Rolling Thunder. This draft reveals a firmer position of the Chinese government regarding possible intervention in Vietnam, stating:

1. The American imperialists are adopting steps to expand the war in Vietnam, which directly violates (侵犯) the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, and severely threatens our nation's security. We have manifested again our serious standpoint to the world: We will never put this matter aside, we will prepare to join the Vietnamese combat at any time. We also need to prepare for handling [a situation in which] the Americans bring the flames of war to our territory....3. The American imperialists are a paper tiger. It [American imperialists] is crazily expanding the war in Vietnam, [and this action] is not a display of its strength, but a display of its weakness....The American imperialists want to further expand the war, [but] its [American imperialists'] fatal defect is, [that] it [American imperialists] is engaging in an unjust (非正義的), reactionary, and aggressive war....5. Now, the Vietnamese people bravely shoulder the burden of fighting against the American imperialists...we shall also carry forward the spirit blended with patriotism and internationalism, do our utmost to Aid Vietnamese and Resist America, resolutely support the South Vietnamese liberation movement, resolutely support the Vietnamese just struggle (正義鬥爭) fighting against the American invasion and for the unification of [their] motherland. Whatever the Vietnamese need us to support, we will offer whatever they need.⁴⁶⁷

Mao approved this draft to be circulated among the party committees above county and regimental levels on April 13. Mao's approval suggests that he agreed with the contents of this instruction, especially the conditions giving legitimacy to China's possible intervention. In this instruction, the Chinese recognition of the legitimacy of their intervention in Vietnam was straightforward. The Chinese explained that they would not ignore any situation in which the U.S. expanded the war against North Vietnam or attacked China. Thus, the Chinese should be ready to deal with these situations, and especially for the possibility of joining the combat with their Vietnamese comrades. Although the situation in Vietnam in 1965 was not as urgent as in Korea in 1950, the Chinese still implied that a Korean War-style intervention would be possible if the

⁴⁶⁷ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol.11: 359-60; and *Jianguo yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian*, vol. 20: 141-43.

DRV requested it. To be sure, the Chinese did not specifically state that such an intervention would be a just action saving the DRV from ruin, as they had announced with regard to North Korea in the Korean War. Nevertheless, their emphasis on the North Vietnamese “struggle” against U.S. invasion as “just” implies that a Korean War-style intervention would also be just. Moreover, the Chinese straightforwardly defined a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam as an unjust, reactionary, and aggressive war. Indeed, this statement reflects the influence of communist ideology through use of the word “reactionary.” At the same time, it also shows that the Chinese attempted to distinguish the status of North Vietnam and China from that of the U.S., which was identified as occupying a position of moral inferiority.

However, in the second half of 1965, identification of the legitimacy of Chinese intervention was again missing from Mao’s comments about the situation in Vietnam. For example, in his conversation with Hoang Van Hoan on July 16, 1965, Mao explained his strategy for the struggle:

...At first, our motto was mainly for the political struggle and the military struggle was secondary. Later, the political and military struggles became equal. And then the military struggle will be the main [part], the political struggle will be supportive to the military one. So, we are also escalating step by step. At first, we destroy a platoon, and then a company. Then we annihilate a battalion, and a regiment or two...We should escalate and we should know how to escalate step by step.⁴⁶⁸

And on October 20, 1965, when Mao received a delegation from the DRV, he said:

You fought well in your war, you fought well in both North and South [Vietnam]...Actually, what can resolve problems is still relying on your fighting, and of course negotiations...what kinds of issues you discussed with the Americans I have not noticed yet. I only pay attention to how to fight with the Americans, and how to expel the Americans [from Vietnam]. [You] can negotiate when a certain time comes, but [you] cannot always lower your tone, must raise the tone higher. Be prepared that the enemy will cheat you.⁴⁶⁹

Both conversations indicate that Mao paid more attention to the strategic and tactical issues of the North Vietnamese conduct of the war than to the righteousness of Chinese intervention.

The development of the conflict in June, 1965, may explain why Mao focused more on the practical issues of the North Vietnamese struggle with the U.S. As mentioned earlier, Beijing successfully sent its message about China’s intention and possible response to Washington through the British diplomatic system early that same month. According to Hershberg and Chen,

⁴⁶⁸ 77 *Conversations*, 87.

⁴⁶⁹ *Mao Zedong waijiao wenxuan*, 570-572.

this move not only enabled the Americans to understand Chinese intentions, but also convinced the Chinese that the danger of a direct Sino-American confrontation had been reduced.⁴⁷⁰ Therefore, this development may have led Mao to focus more on the North Vietnamese strategy for the struggle rather than on the assessment of China's decision to go to war, which was not urgent as it had been in the late 1964 and early 1965.

Zhou Enlai

According to Chinese official records, Zhou participated in at least several discussions about the developing situation in Indochina with either the relevant Chinese bureaucrats or the DRV leadership in June and July 1964. Among these discussions, only the record of Zhou's trip to Hanoi is partially available. Zhou's objective was to lead a Chinese delegation to participate in a four-day meeting, between July 5 and 8, 1964, to discuss the situation of Vietnam and the Pathet Lao with both the DRV and the Pathet Lao leaders in Hanoi.⁴⁷¹ In his analysis of the situation in Indochina, Zhou considered that the Americans would not cease their invasion of Southeast Asia. That, he said, would lead to one of two possible outcomes: either the U.S. would reinforce its "special warfare," or it would expand it to a local war in which the U.S. would send troops from South Vietnam and Laos to bomb or invade North Vietnam. No matter which scenario the U.S. carried out, the Chinese people would definitely support the Southeast Asian people's struggle. Zhou suggested that the communist parties in Southeast Asia should prepare to engage in a prolonged struggle by adopting a two-handed strategy, politically insisting on the Geneva Accords in order to expose the U.S. intention to break them and military strengthening preparations for engaging in a prolonged war. Regarding the conditions for China's intervention, Zhou said that the guiding principles for the struggle were to do everything possible to contain the war within its current scope, while preparing to cope with the second possibility whose guiding principle was "the U.S. moves a step, then China moves; the U.S. sends its force, then

⁴⁷⁰ Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 63-64. They drew this conclusion by looking Deng Xiaoping speech at politburo meeting, April 12, 1965, Zhou speech at politburo meeting, April 12, 1965, and minutes, politburo meeting, April 12, 1965 in the Chinese Central Archive.

⁴⁷¹ The PRC Foreign Ministry's Diplomatic History Research Office, *Zhou Enlai waijiao huodong dashiji, 1949-1975* (A Chronology of Zhou Enlai's Diplomatic Activities, 1949-1975) (Beijing: World Knowledge Press, 1993), 413

China sends its force.”⁴⁷² These analyses and suggestions indicate that before the Gulf of Tonkin incident Zhou had been aware of the chance of escalation of the Vietnam conflict, and he understood that Chinese intervention would depend on U.S. actions. But Zhou did not clarify what sort of force China would send.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident seemed immediately to trigger Zhou’s identification of legitimate grounds for intervening in the conflict. On August 5, 1964, when he received the Cambodian ambassador, Zhou said:

The Department of Defense of the United States has announced [that they will] bomb the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in order to make reprisals and expand the flames of war on the groundless excuse of so-called “fact.” It is absolutely unallowable to unscrupulously (肆無忌憚地) carry out such a continued provocation (挑釁) upon a sovereign state. For this, we have to answer...to preserve the peace of Southeast Asia and Indochina are both our most pressing affairs and tasks.⁴⁷³

In his talk with Elisabeth Comber, a Chinese-born Eurasian author, on September 10, 1964, Zhou mentioned:

Once the United States invades North Vietnam, we will be forced to recognize that [invasion] as a threat to us. We of course will offer the Vietnamese whatever they need to engage in a just war (正義戰爭) fighting for liberation. We firmly believe that the Vietnamese people can fully rely on their own power to liberate their own land. But we will regard the American troops invading North Vietnam as a hostile act toward China; we are also fully prepared for this.⁴⁷⁴

On November 24, Zhou dispatched a telegram expressing support for North Vietnam, stating that “the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is a brother neighbor closely related to China, and the Chinese people have a brotherhood with the people in Indochina as close as flesh and blood, and will absolutely not watch our neighbors being invaded.”⁴⁷⁵ On December 16, when he was interviewed by Edgar Snow, Zhou made another claim stating Beijing’s position that if the U.S. engaged in lawless activities in the area of Indochina, China could not sit idly by.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷² Qiang Zhai, *China & the Vietnam Wars*, 131-32; and Tong Xiaopeng, *Fengyu sishinian* (Forty Years of Storms) (Beijing: Zhongyang wenxian, 1996), vol. 2: 220-21.

⁴⁷³ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 662-63.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 667.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 689.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 693-94.

These identifications are straightforward. In Zhou's words, China would not ignore a situation in which a neighbor, specifically North Vietnam, was invaded by the U.S. Thus, China would certainly offer support to its neighbor if the scenario occurred. However, Zhou's statements do not provide a detailed context for further understanding the logic of his application of those ideas in late 1964. Zhou used "just war" to describe the North Vietnamese struggle against the Americans, but he also defined that "just war" as a war for liberation. It seems that communist ideology had more influence upon his identification of legitimacy than the CRWT. In addition, his recognition of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam as a threat to China, in his talk with Elisabeth Comber, indicates that the calculation of China's security influenced Zhou's perspective on the conflict. These records can only suggest that Zhou had made an assessment of the legitimacy of Chinese intervention by late 1964.

His identification of the legitimacy of Chinese intervention became clearer when Zhou carried out the task of signaling Chinese intentions to the U.S. through different diplomatic channels in 1965. During his trip to Algeria in March, Zhou first expressed his opinion on the escalation of the Vietnam conflict since Operation Rolling Thunder at a mass meeting on March 29:

The Chinese people will resolutely echo the recent announcement issued by the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NLF), and will offer the South Vietnamese all necessary substance, including weaponry and every material for war. We also are prepared to dispatch our personnel to fight together with the South Vietnamese people when the South Vietnamese people need them.⁴⁷⁷

The next day, Zhou expressed his opinion on the U.S. escalation of the Vietnam conflict in a private conversation with Ahmed Ben Bella, the President of Algeria. Zhou considered that the escalation was a bluff aimed at compelling the DRV and China to engage in negotiations. "Unconditional cease-fire," as the U.S.-proposed precondition for proceeding with negotiations, was not only unacceptable to the DRV and China, but it also meant that "South Vietnam would once again be enslaved" as a puppet regime of the U.S. Thus, any activities leading to negotiations were "unfavorable to the liberation of the people in South Vietnam, if viewed objectively."⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁷ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 721-22; and Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 408.

⁴⁷⁸ 77 *Conversations*, 76.

On April 2, 1965, Zhou highlighted China's four principles for dealing with the development of the conflict when he met the Pakistani president, Ayub Khan, in Karachi: first, "China will not take the initiative to provoke a war against the United States"; second, "China means what it says, and China will honor whatever international obligations it has undertaken"; third, "China is prepared"; and fourth, "if the United States expands the war to China, it will really suffer."⁴⁷⁹ Zhou also addressed the issue of war expansion:

Our position is that even if the war is not expanded to China, still China will support Vietnam, so long as the DRV requests it, so long as the NLF in South Vietnam request it...The United States wants to play with fire and to take the risk. China hopes to extinguish the fire...The expansion of the war is caused by the United States, not initiated by us. Although China has adopted an attitude of restraint, if the United States expands the war on this battlefield, the war flame will spread.⁴⁸⁰

Zhou's words made it clear that China would certainly enter the war if the U.S. expanded the conflict into Chinese territory. With regard to the scenario of a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam, Zhou's signal suggested that China would undertake a Korean War-style intervention only in response to North Vietnam's request. In other words, these signals were telling Washington that China was not eager to confront the U.S. unless its territory was attacked or its allies were calling for help because of U.S. invasion.

On April 12, 1965, when China's leaders were identifying which scenario would bring China into the war, Zhou maintained his earlier position that a U.S. invasion of North Vietnam should be the one to do so. Zhou said that China should "gain mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck" and "leave some leeway" in coping with the U.S. intervention in Vietnam. He also suggested that Beijing should employ the slogan "Aid Vietnam, Resist America" later, because the Chinese government was only supporting the Vietnamese, who should be given first place in making the decision.⁴⁸¹ In the end, the Politburo meeting decided upon all of the above strategies in response to the U.S. military activities in Vietnam: first, if the United States invaded North Vietnam, China would send troops to its defense; second, China would give warnings – some clear, others deliberately ambiguous – to the United States, to deter it from extending its

⁴⁷⁹ Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 65; and 77 *Conversations*, 76-83.

⁴⁸⁰ 77 *Conversations*, 76-83.

⁴⁸¹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 724; and Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 63.

military operations into North Vietnam, let alone China; and third, China would avoid as long as possible a direct military confrontation with the United States, but not shrink from one.⁴⁸²

The idea that China would not attack unless the U.S. invaded North Vietnam or China and the Vietnamese called the Chinese for help constituted the main message when Zhou explained China's response and intention in the diplomatic arena during the rest of 1965. On April 27, Zhou repeated this message when he talked with Ne Win, the Prime Minister of Burma:

We [Chinese] are going to gain mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck, we will not actively provoke a war. If the U.S. provokes a war, then we will fight back. Regarding the issue of our volunteers supporting the Vietnamese, only when the Vietnamese side has need to request us [to offer help], will we then dispatch [our volunteer troops], [otherwise] we will not send out [our troops] on our initiative.⁴⁸³

But on May 16, in a conversation with a delegation of the NLF, Zhou emphasized that a U.S. attack on China's territory would constitute the precondition triggering a Chinese decision for war. Zhou said:

We will go to Vietnam if Vietnam is in need, as we did in Korea...The war will have no limits if the US expands it to Chinese territory. The US can fight an air war. Yet, China also can fight a ground war.⁴⁸⁴

Zhou said something similar May 28, when he met Subandrio, the foreign minister of Indonesia, at Guangzhou. Zhou said:

If the United States bombs China, that means bringing the war to China. The war has no boundary. This has two meanings: First, you cannot say that only air war on your part is allowed, and land war on my part is not allowed. Second, not only may you invade our territory, we may also fight a war abroad [sic].⁴⁸⁵

These statements indicate that Zhou's identification of the legitimacy for Chinese intervention includes at least two justifications, self-defense and helping North Vietnam resist a U.S. invasion.

Again on November 30, in his talk with Jean Chauvel, the representative of the French foreign minister, Zhou repeated the same perspective on the Vietnam conflict. Zhou mentioned that, "Unless [the Vietnamese] fight until the U.S. admits defeat, it will be impossible to have negotiations." Zhou emphasized the Chinese experience in struggling against the U.S. which led to the conclusion that "[according to] the Vietnamese and our experiences, all [of them indicate

⁴⁸² Quoted in Hershberg and Chen, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," 64. Although no evidence shows that Zhou had proposed these three strategies, he certainly agreed with the final decision.

⁴⁸³ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 727.

⁴⁸⁴ 77 *Conversations*, 84.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 86.

that] unless the U.S. admits defeat, it will not agree to have negotiations;” thus, in Zhou’s words, “the current negotiation proposed by the U.S is a swindle, now there is no chance of having negotiations with the U.S.” Additionally, Zhou reiterated the principle of China’s use of force, that, “if the U.S. determines to expand the war to China, we will resolutely fight back at any cost,” but the Chinese government “will not provoke the U.S. to expand the war.” At the end of the talk, Zhou concluded that:

[In the] Vietnam War [it] is the U.S. [that is] escalating [the level of conflict], the responsibility is on the U.S., not on anyone else. We [China and the DRV] are socialist states, and neighbors, we absolutely should not only offer spiritual, but also material support to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.⁴⁸⁶

Yet, these expressions were still straightforward and revealed very little regarding Zhou’s identification of the moral standing of the U.S. The only document showing that Zhou might make a judgment on the moral standing of the U.S. was his congratulatory message for the 5th anniversary of the NLF on December 20, 1965. In this message, Zhou declared:

The thing is very clear, the Vietnamese people do not invade the U.S., [but it] is the U.S. that invades Vietnam; invading Vietnam is all by the U.S. to impose on the Vietnamese people. Thus, in order to achieve the liberation of South Vietnam and then the peaceful unification of Vietnam, it can never be in accordance with the enemy’s terms...In a word, the aggressor must withdraw from Vietnam, and it is impossible to have other options...The only choice of the Vietnamese people is to fight resolutely, fight ruthlessly, until the American aggressor get out of Vietnam...Being a brotherhood-neighbor as close as lips to teeth, the Chinese government and 650 million Chinese people resolutely support the Vietnamese people’s just struggle against the U.S...The Chinese people are prepared for a long time. If American imperialists insist to keep walking on the path of expanding war and contesting with the Chinese people again, the Chinese people will resolutely accept the challenge, and have the honor to keep the U.S. company until the end.⁴⁸⁷

In this statement, Zhou clearly used the word “aggressor” to imply the moral inferiority of the U.S. But it offers no other evidence that Zhou had made a judgment of the moral standing of the U.S.

According to Zhou’s statements, it seems that the justifications of self-defense and helping North Vietnam resist the U.S. invasion in response to a Vietnamese call for help provided the main frame of reference helping him to legitimize China’s possible intervention in the conflict. Although those ideas are similar to the elements of the CRWT, Zhou’s remarks do not present strong evidence that his justifications were derived from considerations of morality. In addition

⁴⁸⁶ Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan, vol. 4: 532-35.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 538-543.

to the lack of detailed sources, Zhou's role as the mouthpiece of the PRC may explain why his application of those justifications was straightforward. Since Zhou shouldered the task of signaling China's intentions to the rest of the world, the message could not be so complex as to confuse the audience. However, we cannot entirely reject the possibility that Zhou's statements reflected his concern that Chinese intervention required the legitimacy resulting from a righteous cause. Zhou's indefatigable effort to justify the possible Chinese intervention suggests that the Chinese government cared about the international opinions toward its military actions. Thus, ideas of righteous war may well have functioned as the frame of reference helping Zhou to legitimize the possible Chinese intervention.

Other Leaders

This section focuses on Chen Yi's remarks about the Vietnam conflict. Chen Yi was the foreign minister of the PRC at that time, and his remarks on China's policy toward Vietnam thus represented the Chinese government's attitude. Moreover, the secret conversation between Chen Yi and Donald Hopson was one of the most significant attempts the Chinese government made to convey its signals to the U.S. and needs to be examined in detail.

As the foreign minister of the PRC, Chen Yi had several times expressed Beijing's intention to support North Vietnam and the NLF on diplomatic occasions around the period of the Gulf of Tonkin incident. On July 6, 1964, in his letter replying to the DRV's foreign minister, Chen Yi wrote:

[As to] any invasion of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, [it] cannot be expected [that] China will watch with folded arms. The American intervention and invasion of South Vietnam must stop; the American troops and military personnel must withdraw from South Vietnam. The internal affairs of South Vietnam can only be resolved by the South Vietnamese people themselves.⁴⁸⁸

After the Gulf of Tonkin incident, Chen Yi explicitly declared that the Chinese would stand with their Vietnamese comrades to fight against a U.S. invasion. At a reception receiving an Indonesian delegation on August 17, Chen warned that the "American imperialists" must be punished, and the Chinese people and Southeast Asian people would have to follow through on supporting the Vietnamese struggle against invasion.⁴⁸⁹ On September 2, at a reception hosted by

⁴⁸⁸ Liu Shufa ed., *Chen Yi nianpu*, 1038.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1043.

the DRV ambassador, Tran Tu Bihn, Chen condemned the U.S. for making excuses to launch a surprise attack upon the DRV as the first step in expanding the Indochina war; thus, the U.S. would have to take the consequence for the flagrant crime it was committing.⁴⁹⁰ Chen Yi made another statement supporting the Vietnamese in a telegram dispatched to the foreign minister of the DRV on September 7, which stated that the Chinese government and people absolutely agreed with and resolutely supported the righteous ground the DRV possessed to fight against American imperialism's evil plot, and if the U.S. dared to launch a new military assault, China would resolutely stand with Vietnam to fight the struggle to the end.⁴⁹¹

Chen Yi gave a clearer explanation of which methods China would use in standing with the Vietnamese people after the Johnson administration launched Operation Rolling Thunder. During his March trip to Nepal, Afghanistan, and Pakistan in 1965, Chen addressed a similar message to those leaders who were concerned about the escalation of the Vietnam conflict. Chen stated that China's influence upon the development of the Vietnam conflict might be overestimated, because it was entirely up to the Vietnamese to decide whether to fight or achieve peace. China's attitude, in Chen's opinion, was supporting the Vietnamese to fight against the U.S. invasion without preconditions.⁴⁹² Taking Zhou Enlai's speech in Algeria at the end of March 1965 into account, Chen's unconditional commitment for supporting the DRV may have included the option of dispatching forces at North Vietnam's request.

With regard to the conditions under which China would enter the war, Chen made a more detailed and precise statement in his conversation with Hopson at the end of May 1965. According to Hopson's report, in addition to expressing the official four principles of China's policy toward intervention, Chen Yi made an attempt to explain the role Beijing played in the Vietnam conflict and its link with Hanoi. He refuted the assumption that the continuance of the Vietnam conflict was because Beijing manipulated Hanoi's policy from behind the scenes. Chen said:

Americans, British and some others had an erroneous viewpoint in thinking that the war was being fought because of Chinese support. They also thought wrongly that if Chinese brought influence to bear there could be peace. If the North Vietnamese wanted peace, "we would support it"; if they wanted to fight on, "we would

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., 1047.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 1048.

⁴⁹² *Chen Yi zhuan* (A Biography of Chen Yi) (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House, 1995), 586.

equally support this". The point was that the Vietnamese would not necessarily listen if the Chinese interfered.⁴⁹³

Hopson went on to record: "He (Chen Yi) agreed that the Chinese could ask their friendly contacts to talk, but whether the Vietnamese listened was up to them." About the question of whether China had the ability or willingness to conciliate the conflict, Chen Yi explained,

The very existence of the country was at stake, and their hopes for reunification. The Chinese therefore had no right to place obstacles in Viet Nam's [Vietnam's] path to liberation. It was entirely up to Vietnamese to decide. "Whether we help or not, they will still fight."

Although Chen Yi's explanation, stressing that Beijing's influence upon Hanoi had been overestimated by the U.S. and Britain, was questionable, his attempt also indicates that Beijing was communicating to Washington its unwillingness to have a direct confrontation with the U.S. It didn't mean that Beijing lacked the will to engage in a war with the U.S.; rather, according to Chen Yi's statement, China would enter the Vietnam War without hesitation if its bottom line were violated. Later in this conversation, Chen mentioned:

China supports Viet Nam [Vietnam] unconditionally. An aggression against Viet Nam is an aggression against China. If war is expanded to Chinese territory, China will take part...China is not afraid of the United States expansion of war. If America wants to "break down limits" of war Chinese will have right to go to any lengths.... We are prepared. Let Johnson escalate if he wants. When he escalates to the level of China then we'll take part.⁴⁹⁴

The messages Chen Yi conveyed to Hopson revealed the same justification Zhou Enlai expressed on many occasions for China to use force in Vietnam. The clearest condition was that if the U.S. expanded the war into Chinese territory, China would use force to strike back. Regarding the Vietnamese call for help in the face of American invasion, Chen Yi only gave vague formulations that "China supports Viet Nam unconditionally", and "An aggression against Viet Nam is an aggression against China." Taking China's four principles into account, Chen Yi may also have been implying that a Vietnamese call for help would result in China using Korean War-style force in Vietnam if necessary.

⁴⁹³ Donald Hopson, "Report to Foreign Office, No. 720, Priority/Confidential, 31 May 1965," Foreign Office 371/180990, London. The number of this archive seems to be misreported in James G. Hershberg and Chen Jian's article, "Reading and Warning the Likely Enemy," which gives the number as FO 371/180996. All parts of Chen and Hopson's conversation are quoted in this source.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

Much like Zhou's, Chen's remarks and statements indicate that a justification similar to elements of the CRWT was used by the foreign minister to condition the premise of the possible Chinese intervention. Yet Chen described the justification straightforwardly, revealing little in the logic for applying the concept of righteous war. Thus, the documentary evidence suggests that the ideas of righteous war could have been a frame of reference for Chen to identify the legitimacy of China's decision to enter the war if the U.S. expanded the conflict into North Vietnam.

Analysis of the *People's Daily*

The period for press observation in this case consists of the dates between August 3, 1964, the day on which the *People's Daily* started to report the Gulf of Tonkin incident, and December 31, 1965. The end date is an arbitrary choice. After June 7, 1965, the probability of a direct military confrontation between Beijing and Washington in Vietnam had gradually declined. But this did not cause Beijing to stop supporting Hanoi. Hence, I selected December 31, 1965 as the end date in order to present a more complete picture of Chinese media pronouncements during 1964 and 1965. The data collected in this case comes from published condemnations of U.S. activities in Vietnam. According to the data, a total of 848 instances of moral condemnation appeared in the 516 days observed, yielding an average daily rate of 1.643, which is the second highest rate among the five cases assessed in this study.

I take June 7, 1965 as the watershed date for dividing the period of observation. As mentioned in the section of historical background, after Operation Rolling Thunder was launched, the Chinese government kept warning the American government that if it continued to escalate its military involvement, China would do everything necessary, even at the risk of a Korean War-type confrontation, to assist North Vietnam in resisting America. Beijing's signals were not be delivered until the Chinese government sought to convey the messages to Washington through the British diplomatic channel between late May and early June, 1965. On June 7, the British confirmed to the Chinese that the signals had been delivered to Washington. After China's leaders were certain the signals had arrived at Washington, they gradually became more confident that the risk of a direct military confrontation between China and the U.S. had been reduced. Once this watershed date has been introduced into the analysis, the data results in the

daily averages for the period of escalation (August 3, 1964 – June 7, 1965) and the period after signaling was established (June 8, 1965 – December 31, 1965) of 1.858 and 1.324 respectively.

According to these findings, the frequency of morality-based condemnation decreased during the period when the Chinese were reassured that the danger of a direct Sino-American confrontation had been reduced. This result does not contradict my assumption about the application of morality-based condemnation, namely that an increased frequency suggests that a decision will be made to go to war. Moreover, the pattern presented in this case implies that a decreased frequency of China's use of morality-based condemnation may suggest a decision not to go to war.

Conclusion

The records of this case show that some of the concepts of the CRWT were invoked by the Chinese leaders to legitimize their decision for a possible Chinese intervention in the conflict in Vietnam. The identification of legitimacy seemed to help the Chinese leaders to define the preconditions that would trigger Chinese intervention in the Vietnam War. The concept of righteous war may have assisted the Chinese leaders to identify whether the decision for war was the right thing to do. This interpretation can be supported by Mao's statements regarding the conditions triggering the Chinese intervention, especially in his conversation with Edgar Snow. In that conversation, Mao pointed out that China's use of force outside its own territory should be regarded as a crime, and only a legitimate cause would remove the stigma of crime. However, it should be noted that the currently available evidence cannot further prove that the concept of righteous war had a more critical influence on the Chinese decision for possible intervention in the conflict. Zhou Enlai and Chen Yi did express ideas similar to those of the CRWT to justify and condition the scenario for Chinese intervention, but the relevant documents do not provide enough evidence to trace the logic behind their application of those concepts.

The next question is why the identification of legitimacy did not result in a Chinese decision to go to war, which in this case means a substantial commitment to dispatch large numbers of Chinese troops into North Vietnam to fight against the U.S. This outcome may have resulted from the reality that the U.S. acts in the war had not met the Chinese conditions triggering the intervention. Indeed, from the viewpoint of historical study, to answer a "what if" question may not be a proper way to understand history. But in this case it would not hurt our understanding of

the application of the CRWT to ask how the Chinese would have responded if the U.S. had satisfied the conditions the Chinese had set for intervening in the conflict. Both Zhou's and Chen's statements may answer this question. The Chinese would have carried out a Korean War-style intervention if either the U.S. had attacked the Chinese territory or their Vietnamese comrades had called for help in the face of a massive U.S. invasion of North Vietnam. This hypothetical scenario suggests that the Chinese would be likely to enter a war when conditions informed by the CRWT had been met.

The results from the analysis of the *People's Daily* also agree with my assumption about the application of the concept of righteous war, which is that the Chinese government may highlight righteous legitimacy when the decision for war is likely. My inference is supported by the result that the Chinese decreased the frequency of morality-based condemnation when they had been reassured that the U.S. had received the signal revealing China's intentions. This outcome suggests that the morality-based condemnation used in the *People's Daily* was more than a "moral cloak." In other words, the frequency seems to reflect the receding of the precondition triggering the influence of the CRWT, namely, the Chinese perception that war was imminent. Hence, this result suggests that a lessened emphasis on the legitimacy gained by showcasing the moral inferiority of the opponent may occur when the necessity of a decision for war has receded.

Chapter 7 - The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict, 1969

The Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969 not only marked the end of the Sino-Soviet alliance, which had existed in name only since both sides started their political and ideological dispute in 1960, but also opened the window to the Chinese for the Sino-American rapprochement. The direct cause that triggered the outbreak of this conflict was the Sino-Soviet border dispute, in which the Chinese government claimed that the Soviets had encroached on China's territory.⁴⁹⁵ During the crisis, China's leaders considered the danger of a Soviet invasion to be high. These facts suggest that the justification of self-defense should have influenced a Chinese decision for war. Nevertheless, the Chinese did not decide upon an offensive military operation on a considerable scale as in the Sino-Indian War. This case provides a good example for testing the limits of the influence of the CRWT. With China's leaders facing the danger of a massive invasion by the U.S.S.R., pragmatism and righteousness pointed toward quite different courses of action – with the pragmatic prevailing over the righteous.

Historical Background

The modern shape of the Sino-Soviet border was mostly decided by the four treaties signed between the Qing Dynasty and Czarist Russia in the late 19th century, which were the Treaty of Aigun (1858), the Convention of Beijing (1860), the Tacheng Agreement (1864), and the Treaty of Ili (1881).⁴⁹⁶ Those “unequal” treaties not only resulted in a considerable loss of territory for China, but also gave rise to Chinese resentment that foreshadowed the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, the Soviet government issued a declaration repudiating the “unequal” treaties and relinquishing all claims to territories taken away from China by the czars and the Russian “bourgeoisie.”⁴⁹⁷ This declaration gave the Chinese an impression that the Soviet Union was willing to give up many territories Czarist Russia had

⁴⁹⁵ See for example, the *People's Daily*, March 3, 4 and 16, 1969.

⁴⁹⁶ Li Danhui, “1969 nian zhongsu bianjie chongtu: yuanqi he jieguo” (The Sino-Soviet Border Conflict in 1969: its causes and consequences), *Dangdai zhongguoshi yanjiu* (Research on Contemporary Chinese History), no. 3 (1996): 39.

⁴⁹⁷ Tai Sung An, *The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1973), 47.

gained in Manchuria and other areas in Asia.⁴⁹⁸ But the Soviets had second thoughts when the subsequent negotiations with the Chinese were proceeding. In 1924, a new agreement between the Moscow and Beijing governments was finally concluded. The agreement was supposed to achieve a new delimitation of the Sino-Soviet border, but it was never carried out.⁴⁹⁹

The subsequent development of Sino-Soviet relations in the early 20th century added further complexity to the border issue. In 1929, a conflict between the Republic of China and the Soviet Union occurred in Manchuria. Although the cause of that conflict was not the existing border issues, it ended with the Soviet seizure of actual control over Heixiazi Island at the confluence of the Ussuri and Amur rivers.⁵⁰⁰ In Xinjiang, the Soviet expansion of influence reached its height in the 1930s. This expansion was interrupted because of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, but it was revived after the end of World War II. The Soviets' last-minute attempt ended up in vain on the eve of the victory of the Chinese Communists in 1949, when the Chinese Nationalist commander in Xinjiang failed to respond to Stalin's proposal that the Soviets would immediately extend diplomatic recognition to the new state and order the Chinese Communists to halt their advance into the region if the local Nationalist government declared its independence from China.⁵⁰¹ The predomination of Soviet influence in Xinjiang was basically ended after the Chinese Communists won the Chinese Civil War in 1949.⁵⁰²

The issue of Sino-Soviet border disputes was set aside after Mao Zedong proclaimed the "leaning to one side" policy allying China with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp to confront the Western powers.⁵⁰³ Ignoring the disputes was not the same as resolving them, especially when the actual line of control was considerably different from the official delimitation recognized by the two governments.⁵⁰⁴ The unresolved border issues reemerged in the late 1950s when the Sino-Soviet relationship began to deteriorate and the Soviets tilted

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., 47-50.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 52.

⁵⁰⁰ Xu Yan, *Liushinian guoshi jiyao: Junshi juan*, 277

⁵⁰¹ Tai Sung An, *The Sino-Soviet Territorial Dispute*, 54-55.

⁵⁰² Ibid., 55.

⁵⁰³ Li Danhui, "1969 nian zhongguo bianjie chongtu: yuanqi he jieguo," 41.

⁵⁰⁴ Xu Yan, *Liushinian guoshi jiyao: Junshi juan*, 277.

toward India in the Sino-Indian border disputes of 1959.⁵⁰⁵ In 1963, Beijing formally expressed to Moscow its concern about the problems caused by the “unequal treaties” and the questions that needed to be discussed on the issue of Sino-Soviet border.⁵⁰⁶

The PRC and the Soviet Union started a series of negotiations in 1964⁵⁰⁷, but they did not succeed. One of the fundamental differences between the two sides was their standpoints on the issue of the “unequal treaties.” The Chinese insisted that the existing boundary delimitation was caused by the “unequal treaties,” with Chinese territory unfairly extorted by Czarist Russia and inherited by the Soviets. The Chinese view was that once this principle had been accepted and admitted by the Soviets, then Beijing would be open-minded and willing to accept any possible solution. In other words, the Chinese insistence on the issue of the “unequal treaties” was merely a way of saving face while conceding actual loss of territorial control. However, Moscow agreed to negotiate only those areas which were disputed, but was not willing to heed Beijing’s call for a renegotiation of all unequal treaties from the 19th century.⁵⁰⁸ The Soviet response led the Chinese to make a wrong estimation that Moscow not only refused to admit the very basic recognition that there had been “unequal treaties,” but was also unwilling to resolve the current disputes caused by the unclear delimitation.⁵⁰⁹ Mao’s talk with a delegation of the Japanese Socialist Party on July 10, 1964, in which he criticized the Soviet seizure of territories from other countries, further contributed to the deadlock in negotiations. Not only the Chinese but also the Soviets adopted a tougher attitude after they learned of those comments.⁵¹⁰ Due to the

⁵⁰⁵ Li Danhui, “1969 nian zhongsu bianjie chongtu: yuanqi he jieguo,” 41-42; and Yang Kuisong, “The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino-American Rapprochement,” *Cold War History* 1, no.1 (August 2000): 23

⁵⁰⁶ Li Danhui, “1969 nian zhongsu bianjie chongtu: yuanqi he jieguo,” 42

⁵⁰⁷ Xu Yan, *Liushinian guoshi jiyao: Junshi juan*, 277

⁵⁰⁸ Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 275.

⁵⁰⁹ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi* (Record of Critical Events in the Sino-Soviet Relationship) (Beijing: Renmin, 2007), 379-380; and Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 316.

⁵¹⁰ Li Danhui, “Political Fighters and Adversaries: Sino-Soviet Border Relations in the 1960s - the second research on Sino-Soviet border relation,” *Shehui Kexue* (Social Science), no. 2 (2007): 153-154.

entanglement each side stuck to its own version, and the negotiations of 1964 ended without result.⁵¹¹

Although the initial negotiations were unsuccessful, the disputed border remained relatively calm until late 1968 when the number of clashes increased sharply, especially in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August of that year, the Soviet enunciation of the “Brezhnev doctrine,” and the CCP Central Committee’s 12th Plenary Session.⁵¹² China’s leaders now regarded the Soviet Union, instead of the U.S., as the primary threat to China.⁵¹³ After the Ussuri River became ice bound in the winter of 1968, Zhenbao Island became a hotspot where, according to Chinese reports, many soldiers were wounded by Soviet soldiers who carried out a series of actions attempting to expel the Chinese from the area.⁵¹⁴

China’s leaders didn’t consider a planned military action on the disputed border until February 1969. On January 25, the Heilongjiang Military District proposed to the Shenyang Military Region a plan with a total strength of three companies to carry out a counterstrike against the Soviet activities. The PLA General Staff Department and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved this plan on February 19.⁵¹⁵ Finally, on March 2, Chinese troops engaged in their first military conflict against their former Communist brother on Zhenbao Island.

The first Zhenbao Island clash occurred when Chinese units entered the island for patrol in the morning of March 2, 1969. The Soviet units discovered the Chinese and attempted to expel them from the island. The Chinese units responded with a flank attack executed by another Chinese patrol unit. Both sides exchanged fire under disordered conditions. After about thirty minutes, the conflict ended when the Soviet units made the first step to draw back from the

⁵¹¹ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 379-380; and Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 316.

⁵¹² Christian F. Ostermann, “New Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute, 1969-71,” *CWIHP Bulletin*, nos. 6-7 (Winter 1995), 187; Yang Kuisong, “The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969,” 25.

⁵¹³ Li Danhui, “Political Fighters and Adversaries,” 157.

⁵¹⁴ Yang Kuisong, “The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969,” 25.

⁵¹⁵ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 387-388; Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 319; and Li Danhui, “1969 nian zhongsu bianjie chongtu,” 47.

engagement. The same day, soon after the clash, the Chinese government delivered its diplomatic protest to the Soviets.⁵¹⁶

The second military clash on Zhenbao Island occurred on the morning of March 15. According to the Chinese sources, on the night of March 14 a Chinese infantry platoon and an engineering unit entered the island to plant anti-tank mines. The Soviet garrison discovered the Chinese activities next morning and dispatched six armored vehicles and more than 30 soldiers to expel the Chinese. The Chinese responded with a reinforcement of two additional patrol units. At 8:02 A.M., the Soviet soldiers launched their first response, but it was frustrated by the Chinese resistance after a one-hour engagement. The Soviet units again responded to the Chinese moves at 9:46 A.M., with the support of covering fire. That attack was also repulsed by the Chinese. The last engagement began at 1:35 P.M. when the Soviet units started with two hours of preparatory fire including the support of heavy-caliber artillery. At 3:13 P.M., the Soviet units dispatched ten tanks, 14 armored vehicles, and over 100 infantry soldiers to attack the Chinese positions. After two hours of fierce fighting, the Soviet units stopped and pulled back.⁵¹⁷ Although there were two other skirmishes on March 17 and 21, the Sino-Soviet border on the Ussuri River returned to relative tranquility after the end of March.

The tranquility was superficial, however; behind the border both Beijing and Moscow now had to consider the possibility of a major war. These military conflicts, even though the Chinese were well prepared and had fully anticipated their occurrence, led China's leaders to reassess the likelihood of a major war with the Soviet Union. Mao expressed this sort of concern in a meeting on March 15, saying that the problem of Zhenbao Island was not a simple border issue, but a deeper issue revealing the Soviets' ambition to entirely control China.⁵¹⁸ At their 9th Party Congress between April 1 and 24, 1969, the Chinese Communists were expecting a possible major war, even a nuclear war, and believed that China could not ignore the risk and had to be well prepared.⁵¹⁹ However, the prospect of a possible nuclear war or major war with the Soviets

⁵¹⁶ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 388-389; and Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 320-321

⁵¹⁷ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 391-392; Li Ke and Hao Shengzheng, *Wenhua dageming zhong de renmin jiefangjun*, 321-323; and Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 25-26.

⁵¹⁸ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 395.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 396.

did not deter Mao from showing his determination for a fight against the Soviets if necessary. Mao made such a presentation at the first Plenary Meeting of the 9th Central Committee on April 28, 1969, declaring that China would cope with the Soviets regardless of whether it meant small fighting on the borders or a major war.⁵²⁰ Taking Mao's remarks into account, China's military actions on the Sino-Soviet borders in March could be a "diplomatic" signal showing Beijing's determination to respond to any actions from Moscow, even though those Chinese leaders understood that the Soviets had full capability to launch a massive invasion of, as well as a nuclear war against, China.

While most of China's leaders were expecting and preparing for a possible war with the Soviet Union, an unexpected, but relatively severe, military incident occurred at Tielieketi in Xinjiang. The Soviet garrisons fired at a group of Chinese patrols entering that area. More than thirty Chinese soldiers were killed and more than ten were wounded.⁵²¹ China's leaders were uneasy about the possible consequences of the Tielieketi incident, which they thought was the prelude to Soviet preparations to launch a massive attack. On August 28, the CCP Central Committee, with Mao's approval, issued an "Order of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party" directing the military units and civilians on the border to be well prepared for Soviet military provocation and surprise attack.⁵²²

With a Sino-Soviet war seemingly imminent, the death of Ho Chi Minh unexpectedly provided an opportunity for both sides to alleviate the tension. The Soviet Premier, Alexei Kosygin, headed a Soviet delegation to attend Ho Chi Minh's funeral in Hanoi. During his visit, on September 9 Kosygin dispatched a member of the Soviet delegation to contact the Chinese delegation to inform them that Kosygin was willing to stop at Beijing to meet Chinese leaders on his way back to Moscow.⁵²³ The Chinese delegation reported this to Beijing and received approval to Kosygin's request. On September 11, Zhou Enlai and Kosygin met at the Beijing Airport for a three-and-a-half hour informal meeting.⁵²⁴

⁵²⁰ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 13: 38.

⁵²¹ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2: 130-131.

⁵²² *Ibid.*, 131

⁵²³ Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 37-38.

⁵²⁴ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2:131-132; Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 38.

A rumor about a possible Soviet plan for attacking Chinese nuclear facilities was the first point Zhou raised during the meeting. The Chinese, Zhou said, would regard a Soviet attack on their nuclear facilities as a declaration of war. Kosygin denied that the Soviets had any such intention.⁵²⁵ Both sides quickly shifted the focus to the border disputes. Zhou proposed four temporary measures to resolve the developing crisis: that both sides should maintain the status quo of the borders, avoid any military conflict, withdraw their military forces from the disputed areas, and negotiate with each other when a clash occurred. Zhou also suggested that Beijing and Moscow should resolve the border disputes by a series of negotiations. The meeting ended after Kosygin expressed his support for Zhou's suggestion.⁵²⁶

The Soviet olive branch on September 11, however, did not immediately alter the Chinese estimation about the Soviets' real intentions. At the Politburo meeting of September 16, most of the Politburo members still regarded the Soviet gesture of reconciliation as a smoke screen covering a real intention to launch a massive attack against China.⁵²⁷ Mao warned again on September 17 that China needed to be prepared for fighting a war, even a nuclear war. During the Politburo meetings of September 18 and 22, many members, especially Lin Biao, continued this sort of speculation and maintained that China should not completely cancel its war preparedness.⁵²⁸ Although the Chinese continued to worry about a possible Soviet attack, the second round of Sino-Soviet negotiations on the border issues took place as scheduled on October 20, 1969.

Analysis of Leaders

Mao Zedong

Mao's earliest comment on the issue of the Sino-Soviet border can be traced to July 10, 1964, when he received a delegation from the Japanese Socialist Party. It was during the critical period of the first round of Sino-Soviet border negotiations; but, as mentioned earlier, Mao's comments deepened the deadlock in the negotiations by expressing a confusing message:

⁵²⁵ Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 38.

⁵²⁶ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2: 135.

⁵²⁷ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 401.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*

The Soviet Union has occupied too much territory [of others]....Whenever they can put something into their pockets, they will. It is said that they even want to occupy Xinjiang and Heilongjiang...More than one hundred years ago they occupied the entire area east of Lake Baikal, including Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, and the Kamchatka Peninsula. That account is difficult to square. We have yet to settle that account.⁵²⁹

According to Yang Kuisong, a Chinese authority on the history of the Chinese Communist Party, this comment was typical Mao-style language which was crafted impromptu.⁵³⁰ Mao's impromptu language added an unexpected disturbance into the Sino-Soviet negotiations. The Chinese delegation saw the language as a signal of Mao's approval for their adoption of an intransigent attitude. Inevitably the Soviet delegation became more and more immovable in refusing to acknowledge the issue of "unequal treaties" in response to the tough Chinese attitude and Mao's undiplomatic language.⁵³¹

Mao quickly noticed this unintended consequence of his remarks and attempted to adjust his tone on September 10, 1964, when he received a group of guests from France. He explained that the previous comments were only a tactic, "taking the offensive through firing empty cannons." He further explained that it was not his intention to alter the status quo on the borders; rather the Chairman's purpose was to reach a reasonable settlement of the border issues and, taking the status quo as the basis, to sign a new border treaty with the Soviet Union.⁵³² This explanation came too late to resolve the unintended deadlock, which reached the point of no return in late July, 1964.

The Chairman's remedy, from another viewpoint, indicates that Mao was not inflexible with regard to the Sino-Soviet border dispute. His explanation on September 10, 1964, indicates that Mao not only acquiesced in the status quo on the borders, but also was willing to resolve the potential contention by negotiation. It was similar to his attitude toward coping with Sino-Indian border disputes at their early stage, when Mao was willing to adopt a flexible, even compromising, attitude to resolve the impasse.

⁵²⁹ Minute, "Mao Zedong's Conversations with Sasaki, Kuroda, and other Middle-Leftist members of the Japanese Socialist Party," July 10, 1964, quoted in Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 23.

⁵³⁰ Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 23-24.

⁵³¹ Li Danhui, "Political Fighters and Adversaries," 153-154

⁵³² Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 24; and Li Danhui, "Political Fighters and Adversaries," 155.

As indicated earlier, the Chinese had decided to carry out a counterattack against the Soviet actions at Zhenbao Island on January 25, 1969. Although it would not have been possible for the Chinese garrison to execute the plan of counterattack without Mao's approval, the details of the discussion on the plan have not been released. The earliest record of a directive from Mao during the Sino-Soviet border conflict was taken down in a meeting of the Central Cultural Revolution Group on March 15, 1969. Mao called for a plan to increase the number of military units throughout China, with each county to establish at least a regiment (probably a militia regiment) in response to the possibility of war with the Soviet Union. Concerning the conduct of war, Mao emphasized his idea of people's war as the most feasible strategy to cope with a Soviet attack. He mentioned that "[if] they attack, it will lead us to mobilize, and our strategy is gaining mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck." In his plan, if the Soviets launched an attack, China would have to yield the entire area north of the Yellow River and start people's war south of the river to expel the enemy from China step by step.⁵³³ According to this plan, the Chairman's first priority was the conduct of strategy to resist the possible Soviet invasion. Moral issues were probably too obvious to require much attention. Although Mao emphasized his strategy of "gaining mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck," he said nothing about the righteous legitimacy that China would gain from the possible Soviet invasion.

Mao's comment on the military actions in the Zhenbao Island incident shows the same absence of CRWT-based rhetoric. Mao made the comment on April 14 that:

This fight was commanded by Sun Yuguo. [It shows that troops who] have no experience in fighting can still fight. China firstly didn't dispatch any aircraft, secondly didn't deploy any tanks and armored vehicles, and thirdly had no command cars, [but] fought a nine-hour battle and repulsed three charges the enemy launched. China does not want to [fight] without aircraft, tanks, and armored vehicles, but [can complete the mission] mainly by relying on courage. [We] need to break down blind faith, and this [military performance on] the Zhenbao Island breaks it down.⁵³⁴

Although the content of this comment reveals little on how the Chinese consciously assessed the need to use force, more is explained by where it appeared. It came in a public speech, apparently carefully crafted, which was delivered at the 9th Party Congress. Mao's choice to emphasize the value of human power in military performance rather than pointing out the Soviet provocation

⁵³³ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2: 144-145.

⁵³⁴ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2:112-113; and Wang Nianyi, *Dadongluan de niandai* (The Era of Maelstrom) (Henan: Henan renmin chubanshe, 1988), 322

and occupation of disputed territory indicates that how to defend China from a possible Soviet invasion, not how to punish the Soviet wrongdoings, was Mao's first concern with regard to the Sino-Soviet conflict. Mao's position reflects his pragmatic calculation that China's active moves, such as punishing the Soviet behavior, would invite self-destruction through massive Soviet retaliation.

On April 28, Mao made another public speech at the first Plenary Meeting of the 9th Central Committee, repeating his urgent call to be well prepared for a war with the Soviet Union. This speech was the first time Mao said anything about the righteous legitimacy that China would possess in the face of a massive Soviet invasion. He said:

I have mentioned in the past that [we] need to prepare for war. No matter which year, we need to prepare for war.... 'What if he [the enemy] doesn't come?' Whether he will come or not, we all must be prepared...The main preparation is to have a spiritual preparation. The spiritual preparation is to have the spirit prepared for war.... [Let] others come [into China] to attack, we will not go out and fight. We are not to go out to fight. I mean [we] shall not be provoked, even should the enemy request us to go out, we shall not do so. But if you [the enemy] come to fight, I have to cope with it. It depends on whether you [the enemy] want to fight on a small or large scale. [If they want a] small fight, [we] can do so on the borders. [If they want a] large fight, I advocate [that we shall] make room for the enemy.... If he [the enemy] cannot gain some advantage, in my opinion, he will not come in. [We] must let the entire world see that our fighting is reasonable and advantageous. If he comes in, in my opinion, we will have more advantage, [because] not only [will our standing be] justified, but [we will] also have advantages, [standing on a] good [position] to fight, which lets him be surrounded by the people....⁵³⁵

Mao optimistically declared not only that a massive Soviet invasion would provide just cause to the Chinese but also that the just cause thus provided would also benefit the Chinese conduct of self-defense. Mao's presentation, however, indicates that neither an attempt to retake the Chinese-claimed territory nor a punitive expedition to punish the Soviet provocation interested the Chairman when he defined China's possible responses. In short, Mao was limiting China's response to small number of options compared to the full range of what the CRWT would suggest. Mao made it clear that China would not cross the border to launch a massive attack, even though his speech was permeated by the apprehension that China was exposed to the enemy's attack. Regarding the border disputes, Mao suggested that China could fight on a small

⁵³⁵ *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao*, vol. 13: 38.

scale on the borders if its enemy desired, but the scale certainly would not compete with what had occurred in the Sino-Indian War.

Starting from the first round of Sino-Soviet border negotiations in 1964, Mao had shown a flexible and pragmatic attitude in handling the border issues. He neither intended to retake the disputed territory occupied by the Soviets nor, whatever he actually believed, did he treat those occupations as immoral. On the contrary, Mao agreed to negotiations to solve the border disputes in March, 1969, after the Zhenbao Island Incident.⁵³⁶ Mao's approval of negotiation didn't mean an end to his alertness to the risk of a massive Soviet attack. Mao's repeated advocacy of military preparedness demonstrates that the war scare and the speculation about Soviet intentions to entirely control China still dominated his assessment.

Indeed, according to Mao's presentation of righteous cause, China certainly had the right to take any measures to defend itself against the possible Soviet invasion. This legitimacy did not persuade Mao to undertake a large-scale punitive expedition to punish the perceived wrongdoings, or to defend China by seizing the initiative to attack the Soviets first; instead, Mao asserted that righteous legitimacy would put China in a better position to conduct a defense in depth successfully. This outcome must surely be a result of Mao's understanding that China was confronting a much stronger opponent. For Mao, the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969 was not merely about territorial disputes, but had to be considered in the broader context of the expanding Sino-Soviet split. In this circumstance, China had to be prepared for a major war against the Soviets, which might occur due to the increasing hostility between Beijing and Moscow. The Soviets' superior capability for conducting military operations or delivering a nuclear strike meant that an initial Chinese offensive or massive counterattack could easily provoke retaliation that might severely threaten China's survival. Mao's plan to expand the number of Chinese militia units indicates his belief that full mobilization would be necessary to save China from defeat. Mao's advocacy for conducting people's war to fight against the Soviet invasion also suggests his awareness of China's inferior military capabilities.⁵³⁷ Hence, an

⁵³⁶ Ibid., 21

⁵³⁷ In Mao's theory of war, the people's war was concluded as the feasible strategy for the weaker to fight against the stronger. See Jia Rouyu chief ed., *Mao Zedong junshi sixiang* (Mao Zedong's Military Thought) (Shandong: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1993), ch. 1; and *Mao Zedong xuanji* (Selected Works of Mao Zedong) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), vol 1: 1243-1260.

aggressive conduct of the defense might not be the proper option, because it would increase China's risk of defeat. In other words, the reality of the balance of power, in which China was inferior to the Soviet Union, surely carried great weight in Mao's decision-making during the Sino-Soviet border conflict in 1969. This finding indicates an important limit to the influence of the CRWT, namely that the consideration of righteous legitimacy may yield to pragmatic calculation when the Chinese leaders must decide between offensive action and self-defense while facing the danger of a superior opponent's massive invasion or nuclear attack

Zhou Enlai

Zhou Enlai's understanding of the Sino-Soviet border dispute, like Mao's, can be traced to 1964. On April 25, 1964, Zhou reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the State Council of the PRC that

Our principles to negotiate are: First, [all of] the Sino-Russian treaties signed after the Opium War are unequal, having been imposed on China by Czarist Russia; second, we still agree to use those treaties as the foundation for negotiation, and make some necessary adjustment at the same time; third, [we agree] to conclude a new treaty to replace the old treaties. But the Soviets disagreed [with our principles], [thus] there is no significant progress in negotiation.⁵³⁸

On October 6, Zhou explained to the Premier of Romania, Ion Gherghe Maurer, the causes of deadlock in the Sino-Soviet negotiations by repeating the same argument, that the Soviet Union was unwilling to accept the Chinese three principles to conclude a new border treaty.⁵³⁹ Zhou's opinion was clear: China was not only cooperative but also willing to adjust the borders through compromise, as long as the Soviets acknowledged that the old Sino-Russian treaties were "unequal." Although Zhou regarded the Soviet refusal to acknowledge the "unequal treaties" as inadmissible and the major impediment to significant progress in negotiation, Zhou did not reveal any moral condemnation and still preserved room for a possible resolution.

Zhou retained this relatively cooperative attitude after the Zhenbao Island incident. A day after the incident, several protests against Soviet military action erupted around the Soviet embassy in Beijing and the consulates in Tianjin and Shanghai. Zhou immediately instructed the authorities in those cities to establish a buffer zone between the protesters and the Soviet

⁵³⁸ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 2: 637-638.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, 673.

embassy and consulates in order to prevent unexpected violence.⁵⁴⁰ This instruction shows that Zhou was attempting to avert incidents that might exacerbate Sino-Soviet tensions. On March 14, 1969, a day before the second military clash occurred on Zhenbao Island, Zhou divulged his anticipation of the likelihood of a major Sino-Soviet conflict when he received a delegation from the American Progressive Labor Party. He said:

Now it cannot be told [if a massive conflict will occur or not]. They (the Soviets) are to take this stuff [the military clash on the borders] to mobilize their people and examine the climate of opinion of the world. The Soviet Union has difficulty in attacking China.⁵⁴¹

Like Mao, Zhou never entirely dismissed his apprehension about a massive Soviet attack against China. Zhou conducted a two-handed policy in response to the Soviets' reactions after the Zhenbao Island incident. On one hand, Zhou asked the military to strengthen its deployment of armed forces along the borders in order to prepare to "be rested and ready to face the attack of the fatigued enemy" and "gain mastery by striking only after the enemy has struck."⁵⁴² On the other hand, Zhou informed the Soviets that formal diplomatic communication would be the only channel recognized by the Chinese government, and the former channel of communication by telephone became inappropriate.⁵⁴³ Just as in Zhou's earlier instructions, this two-handed policy apparently was designed for confining unexpected factors within certain limits.

As time passed, Zhou seemed more and more to agree that the risk of a massive Soviet attack was declining. When a small-scale shelling occurred on the Sino-Soviet border on April 3, Zhou offered a suggestion to Mao and Lin Biao about how to respond to the Soviet shelling:

[We] estimate that the attitude and demands the Soviet garrison adopted [on the border] were directed by the Soviet center...the enemy is to bluff and bluster, and to show their posture. We suggest that: 1. Our frontier posts should temporarily ignore the other side's shelling; 2, [We shall] adjust the position of our artillery to aim at the enemy's artillery positions along the bank and covered positions deploying the tanks and armored vehicles, and after several days of the enemy's shelling, suddenly return fire in order to maximize their casualties and issue our protest at the same time. The timing should be scheduled before Vice-Chairman Lin's report is announced....⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁰ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 3: 283.

⁵⁴¹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 3: 285

⁵⁴² Ibid., 286.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ *Zhou Enlai junshi wenxuan*, vol. 4: 555.

This suggestion demonstrates that in Zhou's assessment the risk of a massive Soviet attack had significantly receded; otherwise a sudden counterattack would not be a feasible option because it would cause more uncertainty. Obviously, the estimation that the Soviets were bluffing led Zhou to propose a sudden counterattack.

In fact, during the entire period of the 1969 Sino-Soviet crisis, Zhou was never a hardliner who saw the Sino-Soviet border dispute through the moral prism that the Chinese-claimed territories were sacred and inviolable. Even after the Tielieketi incident, when the risk of a major Sino-Soviet war seemed to have escalated again, Zhou retained his cooperative attitude in attempting to resolve the conflict. On September 7, before Kosygin arrived in Hanoi, Zhou had told the Romanian Maurer, also there to attend the funeral of Ho Chi Minh that "concerning the Sino-Soviet relations, our attitude is to agree to carry out [a series of] reasonable negotiations; before the problems have been settled, [we] should maintain the status quo on the border and avoid military conflict."⁵⁴⁵ This indicates that Zhou had been considering negotiation with the Soviets to resolve the border disputes before the Soviet olive branch on September 9.

Zhou and Kosygin's meeting at the Beijing Airport also supports this inference regarding Zhou's attitude. Moreover, the airport meeting was the first time that Zhou presented the legitimacy of China's response to the possible Soviet military action since the outbreak of the Sino-Soviet border conflict. The risk of a Sino-Soviet war was the first issue raised in the meeting. Zhou stated:

...on the issue of border disputes, China is passive; [if you] spread out the map [you] will know that all of the areas where conflicts are occurring are disputed areas. You always say that we want a war, [but] now we are so busy in our domestic affairs, why would [we] want a war? ... We have no troops stationed in foreign territory, and we also will not invade others, but you redeployed so many troops to the Far East⁵⁴⁶ ... You say that we want to make nuclear war. In fact you are well informed about the level of our nuclear weapons [and you know that we will not do so]. You say that you will take preemptive measures to destroy our nuclear facilities. If you do so, we will declare that this is war, and that this is aggression. We will rise in resistance. We will fight to the end.⁵⁴⁷

Zhou's message made it clear that China wanted neither a major war nor a nuclear war, and that China would not initiate a war against the Soviet Union. China would certainly resist Soviet

⁵⁴⁵ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 3: 319-320.

⁵⁴⁶ Xue Mouhong and Pei Jianzhang, *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao*, 125-126

⁵⁴⁷ Quoted in Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 38.

military actions to the end, especially if there were a preemptive strike targeting China's nuclear facilities (which was of course also regarded by the Chinese as an act of aggression). Zhou was clearly confident that China would possess the righteous legitimacy to resist any Soviet military action piercing into China's heartland. Like Mao, Zhou did not urge that this legitimacy should lead China to undertake an aggressive military counterstrike.

With regard to resolution of the border disputes, Zhou concluded with two major principles and four temporary measures. For the major principles, he proposed:

First, the debates on theory and doctrine between China and the Soviet Union should not have an impact on both countries' relationship, and should not obstruct the normalization between the two; and second, the Sino-Soviet border issue now is the central issue of the Sino-Soviet relationship, both sides can eventually find the solution through negotiation.⁵⁴⁸

Then, he suggested the four temporary measures that both China and the Soviet Union should adopt: both sides should maintain the status quo of the borders, avoid any military conflict, withdraw their military forces from the disputed areas, and negotiate with each other when a clash occurred.⁵⁴⁹ Zhou's suggestion was recognized by Kosygin and eventually came to be agreed upon by both sides as the first step toward resolving the border disputes.

Yet the conversation with Kosygin did not fully remove Zhou's concern about the risk of a Soviet invasion, even though Zhou presented a flexible and cooperative attitude during their meeting. On September 22, Zhou made a public speech aiming to raise military morale and speed up the progress of China's preparedness for war. He advised the military that "now the international situation is tense, we have to be prepared for war, especially for preventing the enemy's surprise attack, and need to be on the alert." Zhou's speech can be seen as a reflection of the tense atmosphere among the Chinese leaders, who still worried about a massive Soviet invasion.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁸ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 3: 320-321.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Between 1969 and 1972, the Soviet added 18-20 divisions to their deployment in the Russian Far East. Hence, to the Chinese, there were no signals showing that the Soviets had started to withdraw their deployment, and the numbers of the Soviet forces still posed a menace to China which could not be ignored. On the Soviet deployment in the Russian Far East, see Lyle J. Goldstein, "Return to Zhenbao Island: Who Started Shooting and Why It Matters," *The China Quarterly*, No. 168 (2001):992-993

Nevertheless, Zhou's activities in late September and early October suggest that he was still hoping to achieve a peaceful resolution of the border issues with the Soviets. Zhou sent Kosygin a letter on September 19 requesting that the Soviets further confirm their acceptance of the four temporary measures. In this letter, Zhou mentioned that, "if [we] can receive your letter confirming [the previous measures accepted at the Beijing Airport meeting], then [it] can be the agreement between the Chinese and Soviet governments, which can come into effect immediately, and be put it into operation." Zhou added: "I believe, if this agreement can be achieved, [it] will help to alleviate the situation on both sides of the border and the process of Sino-Soviet negotiation on the border issues."⁵⁵¹ On October 6, Zhou sent another letter telling Kosygin, "I believe [that] the alleviation of the Sino-Soviet border situation and the inauguration of Sino-Soviet border negotiations will provide a favorable condition to resolve the other problems in the relations between the two countries."⁵⁵²

Examination of the above records suggests that the consideration of just cause had negligible influence upon Zhou's handling of the border conflict in 1969. Zhou would certainly have agreed that any Soviet military action penetrating into China's heartland, especially a preemptive strike aimed at destroying China's nuclear facilities, should be regarded as an act of aggression providing China the righteous justification of self-defense. Nevertheless, as with Mao, this awareness of righteous legitimacy exerted no visible influence on Zhou's handling of the crisis, nor did it persuade him to advocate an aggressive conduct of the defense. This position may have been the result of Zhou's assessment of the balance of power between China and the Soviet Union, in which China was clearly the inferior power. Also, the evidence agrees with the explanation that Zhou's steady attitude favoring a peaceful resolution by flexible means brought him to agree with Mao's plan for a defense in depth.

Other Leaders

To examine other leaders' assessment of the Sino-Soviet border disputes, I select four PLA marshals — Chen Yi, Ye Jianying, Xu Xiangqian, and Nie Rongzhen — because they submitted

⁵⁵¹ Jin Chongji et al., *Zhou Enlai nianpu, 1949-1976*, vol. 3: 321-322.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*, 327.

three reports assessing Sino-Soviet relations.⁵⁵³ Their reports, requested by Mao, not only provided other high-ranking Chinese leaders with a key evaluation of Soviet intentions; they also took a significant step toward the Sino-American rapprochement.

It is necessary to explain the implications of Lin Biao's "Directive No. 1" before examining the four marshals' reports. As mentioned earlier, Lin Biao had strongly expressed his concern about a massive Soviet attack throughout the Sino-Soviet border dispute in 1969. On October 17, Lin Biao issued the Vice-Chairman's "Directive No. 1" which called for urgent preparation for war by the entire army and emergency evacuation of the important leaders.⁵⁵⁴ According to Chinese official records, Mao didn't learn of Lin's directive until the next day, and, dissatisfied, Mao immediately burned most of Lin's report (in a form of a transcribed telephone message) after receiving it.⁵⁵⁵ As the official story about Mao's reaction implies, other Chinese sources also point out that the actual intention of Lin's directive was not what it appeared to be on the surface, a call for preparation against a Soviet surprise attack.⁵⁵⁶ But no matter what the real intention was, Directive No. 1 indicates that even those Chinese leaders who still worried about a Soviet invasion at the last minute had no intention of adopting an aggressive method to respond to the imminent danger they imagined.

The outbreak of the Sino-Soviet border clashes significantly changed the Chinese perception of who was the most threatening enemy. After the 9th Party Congress, the four marshals were instructed by Mao to analyze the international situation and complete their task by

⁵⁵³ The reason why these four marshals were picked to assess the international situation and the Soviet intention remains unknown. Perhaps Liu Bocheng's health problem caused him to be excluded from Mao's consideration. He Long at that time was under a house arrest because of the political persecution caused by the Cultural Revolution. But why Mao didn't choose Zhu De remains unknown. See *Liu Bocheng zhuan* (A Biography of Liu Bocheng) (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House, 2007); *He Long zhuan* (A Biography of He Long) (Beijing: Contemporary China Publishing House, 2007); and Jin Chongji ed., *Zhu De zhuan* (A Biography of Zhu De) (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1993).

⁵⁵⁴ He Ming and Lo Feng, *Zhongsuguanxi zhongda shijian shushi*, 403.

⁵⁵⁵ Feng Xianzhi and Jin Chongji eds., *Mao Zedong zhuan, 1949-1976*, 1564-1565.

⁵⁵⁶ Lin Biao's directive is often regarded by the Chinese as a plot to test his personal control over the PLA. See Wu Dianyao et al., *Zhu De nainpu, 1886-1976*, vol. 3: 1970; and Xu Yan, *Liushinian guoshi jiyao: Junshi juan*, 287.

sending three reports to Zhou and Mao.⁵⁵⁷ In their first report, “Looking at a ‘Zhenbao’ Tree from the Forest of World,” the four marshals made an initial assessment about the consequences of the Zhenbao Island incident, suggesting that it was not the right time for the Soviets to start a massive invasion of China because the Soviet Union was, according to their calculation, not yet ready.⁵⁵⁸

A more detailed report was concluded on July 11, titled “Preliminary Assessment on the War Situation.” In this report, the four marshals repeated their assessment that the timing was not right for the Soviet Union and the United States to carry out massive invasions of China. Although both the Soviet Union and the United States were now regarded as the main enemies of China, the four marshals wrote:

Soviet revisionists regard China as their main enemy. They are more threatening than American imperialists to our nation’s security. On the endless Sino-Soviet borders, Soviet revisionists unceasingly produce tensions, launch military invasion, and assemble masses of troops. They...attempt to establish a ring of anti-Chinese encirclement. These are the critical steps by which Soviet revisionists prepare the war of aggression against China. But if [they] really want to fight with China on a large scale, Soviet revisionists still has plenty of scruples and difficulties.⁵⁵⁹

The four marshals estimated that three major concerns and difficulties prevented the Soviets from launching such an aggression against China. First, “because both China and the U.S. were the enemies of the Soviet Union, the Soviets would not dare to engage in a two-front battle.” In the marshals’ assessment, a Sino-Soviet war would weaken Soviet power in Eastern Europe, where the U.S. would seize the opportunity to take over. Second, if the Soviet Union decided to invade China on a massive scale, it would have to pursue a quick decision; but China would do everything to prevent such an outcome. The four marshals suggested that China should follow Mao’s guidance to engage in a protracted war if the Soviets invaded China. According to their estimation, a protracted war would bring three difficulties to the Soviet Union: it would significantly increase popular hostility against the Soviets within China, it would be exhausted maintaining the supply line to China from the industrial centers in the European part of the

⁵⁵⁷ Xiong Xianghui, *Wode qingbao yu waijiao shengya* (My Career in Intelligence and Diplomacy) (Beijing: Zhonggong dangshi chubanshe, 2006), 178 and 186; and *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2: 146.

⁵⁵⁸ *Zhongguo gongchandang lishijishi*, book 8, vol. 2: 146.

⁵⁵⁹ Xiong Xianghui, *Wode qingbao yu waijiao shengya*, 188.

Soviet Union, and its domestic problems, such as class contradictions and ethnic conflict, would be exacerbated.

The third major point preventing the Soviets from launching an aggression against China was that the Soviet strategic center was in Europe. The four marshals indicated that

...although its [the Soviet Union's] preparation for anti-Chinese war is real, it mainly wants to maintain its political control through the military system, and to suppress domestic and Eastern European resistance; and [the reasons it] makes a show of readiness to fight [are] on the one hand, to vainly attempt to force us to negotiate by its strength, and on the other hand, to make the U.S. believe that it really wants to fight with China on a large scale, in order to gain peace on the western front and persuade the U.S. to allow it to organize a ring of anti-Chinese encirclement, thereby covering its expansion into Southeastern Asia and other areas...⁵⁶⁰

The four marshals presented another report to Zhou on September 17 in response to the new developments after Kosygin's visit to Beijing.⁵⁶¹ In their opinion, "although the Soviet Union has the intention to launch an aggression against China and has already made a corresponding deployment," it "could not make the political decision" because "a war against China is a critical matter of life and death, in which the Soviet revisionists are not certain [if they can avoid a sure defeat]."⁵⁶² Kosygin's visit to Beijing, from their viewpoint, was "a need based on counter-revolutionary pragmatism, which attempted to change the brinksmanship toward our country, by showing the flag of peaceful negotiation, [and] to break away from domestic and foreign predicaments on this occasion," and "to be the basis for Soviet revisionists' policy [making] by inquiring about our intentions." Thus, they thought that the Soviet Union would engage in negotiation and alleviate the tension with China in order to buy time to consolidate the domestic and Eastern European situations, as well as other positions in the Middle East and Asia.⁵⁶³

The significance of the last report, however, was not its anticipation of the Soviet intention to alleviate the tension with China, but its cautious promotion of Sino-American rapprochement. Their last report presented the idea of Sino-American rapprochement, which had been gradually formulated by the four marshals during Kosygin's visit to Beijing. Ye Jianying was inspired by one historical case during the Three Kingdoms period in which the Shu kingdom, administrated

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid., 188-189.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., 198.

⁵⁶² Ibid., 199.

⁵⁶³ Ibid., 199.

by the legendary strategist Zhuge Liang, had successfully carried out the policy of allying itself with the kingdom of Wu to confront the kingdom of Wei, the strongest of the three.⁵⁶⁴ Chen Yi cited Stalin's nonaggression pact with Nazi Germany on the eve of World War II to support the thought.⁵⁶⁵ The four marshals continued this train of idea in the last report, saying that China should seek to take advantage of the Sino-American-Soviet triangle. They suggested that, "[if] American imperialism requests to resume the ambassadorial meetings, we can also choose the opportune time to make a reply [for giving our approval]. Such a tactical action may have a strategic effect."⁵⁶⁶ Thus, from their viewpoint, it was necessary to re-establish Sino-American relations for China to take advantage of the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States.

As their reports show, the issue of morality received little consideration from the four marshals in their evaluation of the Sino-Soviet conflict. Although they defined the possible Soviet invasion as an act of aggression, their strategy to cope with a possible Soviet attack was mainly based on pragmatic calculation. Moreover, their suggestion regarding Sino-American rapprochement shows a Machiavellian style of thinking underlying change in China's grand strategy. For dealing with the possible Soviet invasion of China, the four marshals suggested adopting Mao's plan for a guerilla-type defense in depth and a protracted war.

Analysis of the *People's Daily*

In the case of the Sino-Soviet border conflict, there are a total of 232 days of reporting to observe. The period of observation begins with March 3, the day when the *People's Daily* started to report the Zhenbao Island incident, and ends at October 20, when Beijing and Moscow returned to the negotiating table. In the data collected, the Soviet Union is always the clear object of Chinese condemnation. According to the data, words of moral condemnation appeared a total of 150 times during the period of observation, with a daily average of 0.644 instance of moral condemnation. Compared to the data presented in the previous cases, this daily average is the second lowest among the five cases.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid., 196-197; and Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 45.

⁵⁶⁵ Xiong Xianghui, *Wode qingbao yu waijiao shengya*, 197; and Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969," 45.

⁵⁶⁶ Xiong Xianghui, *Wode qingbao yu waijiao shengya*, 200.

September 9, 1969, is taken as the watershed date in this case. After the Zhenbao Island incident, the Sino-Soviet relationship had hovered on the brink of a major war, and the Chinese were preparing to resist an anticipated large-scale Soviet invasion. The extreme tension began to ease on September 9, when Kosygin's willingness to meet the Chinese leaders was made known to the Chinese delegation in Hanoi. The Soviet olive branch led to the meeting between Zhou Enlai and Kosygin at Beijing Airport on September 11, which achieved an agreement to reopen negotiations on border issues. The introduction of this watershed results in the daily averages of 0.749 and 0.171 for the periods of March 3 – September 9 and September 10 – October 20, respectively.

My assumption about the application of morality-based condemnation is not refuted by the result of this analysis of the *People's Daily*. The decreased frequency after September 9 suggests that the Chinese government's use of morality-based condemnation reflected their assessment of the risk of a direct Sino-Soviet confrontation, especially the danger of a Soviet invasion. This sort of pattern, which can also be found in the cases of the Vietnam War and the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis, indicates that once such a risk has receded, the Chinese government may place less emphasis on the moral inferiority of its opponent.

Conclusion

In this case, we encounter the limitations of the CRWT as an explanatory factor. When China's leaders faced a high danger of another state's massive invasion or nuclear attack, their decision-making was dominated by pragmatic calculation. Although the Chinese leaders, especially Mao and Zhou, employed the idea of righteous legitimacy in their language stating the danger that China faced, considerations of just cause exerted negligible influence upon their conduct for self-defense. Mao's statements indicate that China's inferior capability carried the most weight in his decision-making when he decided upon the plan for a defense in depth. Mao's train of thought was echoed by Zhou and the four marshals when they expressed their perspectives on China's plan for self-defense. This implies that when China's leaders have clearly perceived a scenario in which China is in danger of being invaded by a superior enemy, there is really no need for them to locate the just cause and legitimate the decision for self-defense. Also, this scenario limited the decisions of China's leaders to a narrow range of options

than the CRWT would suggest (e.g., employing an active counterstrike for self-defense), when the pragmatic calculation clearly shows that such an action would bring self-destruction to China.

Evidence from the *People's Daily* supports my assumption about the application of morality-based condemnation, namely that its frequency reflected the likelihood of China's decision for war. The Chinese government evidently decreased the frequency of its morality-based condemnations after September 9, 1969, when Zhou Enlai learned of the Soviet olive branch proffered in Hanoi. This result presents a pattern of Chinese use of language similar to that of 1964-1965; when the Chinese perceived war as not imminent, the frequency of morality-based condemnation seemed to reflect that perception. This congruent result suggests that the language used in the *People's Daily* was not simply a "moral cloak." It shows that the Chinese government had less to say about the moral inferiority of its opponents when it perceived that war had become unlikely.

Chapter 8 - The Sino-Vietnamese War

On February 17, 1979, approximately 330,000 PLA military personnel⁵⁶⁷ crossed the Sino-Vietnamese border to engage in what the Chinese claimed was a “self-defense counterattack against Vietnam.” It was the second largest military operation the PRC had undertaken since 1949. After about one month of fighting, the PRC unilaterally withdrew all of its forces from Vietnam, although border skirmishing, often involving artillery, continued into the early 1980s. This war, defined by the Chinese, was a “punitive” war to “teach” the Vietnamese “a lesson” through a military operation limited in scale and time.⁵⁶⁸ The reasons for the Chinese decision to go to war with the Vietnamese are still debatable. To punish Vietnam’s violent encroachment along the Sino-Vietnamese border was the official justification Beijing announced for going to war.⁵⁶⁹ The Chinese also emphasized that Hanoi’s misbehavior, which included mistreatment of overseas Chinese in Vietnam and the invasion of Cambodia, made Vietnam an aggressor deserving punishment.⁵⁷⁰ Some scholars argue that Beijing’s decision for war aimed to divert Vietnamese military pressure from Cambodia.⁵⁷¹ Others have observed that Beijing’s intention to

⁵⁶⁷ Harlan W. Jencks, “China’s ‘Punitive’ War on Vietnam: A Military Assessment,” *Asian Survey* 19, no. 8 (1979): 11.

⁵⁶⁸ On March 16, 1979, Deng officially defined this war as a “punitive” war in his speech at a meeting of the CCP Central Committee. The document can be found in: <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/d3959bea6294dd88d0d26b42.html>. The content of this speech has not yet been officially released by the PRC, but Zhang Xiaoming, a well-known scholar of Chinese military history, gives credit to this online document by quoting it in his article. See Zhang Xiaoming, “Deng Xiaoping and China’s Decision to go to War with Vietnam,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 3(2010): 19.

⁵⁶⁹ “Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu dui Yue jinxing zihwei fanji baowei bianjian zhandu de tongzhi” (Notice of the Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party about Carrying Out the Self-Defense Counterattack and Combat for Protecting Border against Vietnam) in *Sanzhongquanhui yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* (Selected Works of the Important Documents since the Third Plenum) (Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2011), vol. 1: 58-61.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁷¹ Harlan W. Jencks, “China’s ‘Punitive’ War on Vietnam: A Military Assessment,” 8-9; Steven J. Hood, *Dragons Entangled: Indochina and the China-Vietnam War* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 50-57; and Edward C. O’Dowd, *Chinese Military Strategy in the Third Indochina War: The Last Maoist War* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 6

respond to the Soviet strategy of encircling China through cooperation with Vietnam in Southeast Asia and Deng's attempt to assert control over the military explain the decision for war.⁵⁷² The Chinese decision to conduct the Sino-Vietnamese War was certainly not the result of a single cause. All of the above considerations add up to a more complete picture explaining Beijing's reasons for carrying out the "punitive" war against the Vietnamese.

For the purpose of my research, this chapter will focus on the official Chinese justification – to punish the Vietnamese for their violent acts – and the argument that China was attempting to divert the Vietnamese military from Cambodia, because these two are similar to the CRWT ideas of stopping violence, acting in self-defense, and helping a weaker state fighting against another state's invasion. Moreover, the Chinese decision to carry out the military action on a large scale was not made without dissent.⁵⁷³ The discussions of China's leaders on the options of use of force provide a significant clue to trace the influence of the CRWT upon their decision-making, as the case of the Korean War did. In this regard, the way China's leaders applied the idea of righteous war not only to deciding to go to war but also to their way of ending it makes the Sino-Vietnamese War a most likely case for examining the influence of the CRWT. But one caveat should be mentioned. Due to the lack of available Chinese documentation, there is really no way to trace the decision-making processes of individual leaders. Thus, the section analyzing the leaders will not focus on individuals but will look instead at the entire process of Chinese decision-making while synchronously tracing the activities of China's leaders, propaganda, and the diplomatic system.

Historical Background

The deteriorating relationship between Beijing and Hanoi by 1975 and afterward is a good starting point for understanding the causes of the Sino-Vietnamese War. By 1975, Beijing and Hanoi were already on a collision course, mostly because of their discord stemming from the conduct of the Vietnam War and the ideological dispute over their relationship with the Soviet

⁵⁷² Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to go to War with Vietnam," 4 and 20; Robert S. Ross, *The Indochina Tangle: China's Vietnam Policy, 1975-1979* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 253.

⁵⁷³ See Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 131-134.

Union.⁵⁷⁴ Nixon's visit to China in 1972, which disclosed the opening moves of Sino-American rapprochement, also increased Hanoi's hostility and anxiety toward Beijing.⁵⁷⁵ However, until the last stage of the Vietnam War the two capitals still maintained a superficially harmonious relationship.

The first sign of discord was the negotiation on the delimitation of the offshore boundary, particularly in the Gulf of Tonkin, in August 1974. Hanoi asserted that the boundary line in the gulf had been delimited in 1887 by France and the Qing dynasty, with the result that Vietnam possessed two-thirds of the Gulf of Tonkin. Beijing disagreed. The Chinese argued that the Sino-French Convention of 1887 on the Delimitation of the Frontier only provided an indication of the ownership of the offshore islands, not the delimitation of a "sea boundary line" in the gulf.⁵⁷⁶ To the Chinese, Hanoi's insistence on this delimitation was groundless and the major cause for negotiation becoming futile.⁵⁷⁷

The offshore boundary was not the only territorial dispute between Beijing and Hanoi. Their dispute over the ownership of the Paracel and Spratley Islands and over the demarcation of their land border also worsened their relationship. Of those quarrels, the dispute over the Sino-Vietnamese border created more tension than the issue of the sea boundary.⁵⁷⁸ Beginning in 1975, Hanoi proposed several times that the border be adjusted in areas that Beijing considered to be Chinese territory as recognized by France and the Qing dynasty from 1895.⁵⁷⁹ Violent incidents on the border increased subsequently. In 1977, the first bloody incident erupted at the Youyiguan

⁵⁷⁴ William J. Duiker, *China and Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict* (Berkeley, California: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1986), 61-62.

⁵⁷⁵ Guo Ming ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian* (A 40-Year Development of the Sino-Vietnamese Relationship) (Guangxi: Guangxi People Press, 1992), 117

⁵⁷⁶ King C. Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979: Issues, Decisions, and Implications* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1987), 48; Guo Ming ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 139-142; and Xue Mouhong and Pei Jianzhang, *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao*, 272-274.

⁵⁷⁷ Xue Mouhong and Pei Jianzhang, *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao*, 274.

⁵⁷⁸ Chen, *China's War with Vietnam, 1979*, 49.

⁵⁷⁹ Guo Ming, ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 135-136.

[Friendship Pass], where 500 Vietnamese soldiers infiltrated the border and injured more than 50 Chinese railway workers.⁵⁸⁰

In addition to the increase in border incidents, the year 1977 witnessed another tension between Beijing and Hanoi – the issue of Cambodia. After the Vietnam War, the keystone of the foreign policy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV) was to form “special relationships” with Laos and Cambodia, leading eventually to the establishment of an “Indochinese Federation.”⁵⁸¹ This policy was obstructed by the new Pol Pot government in Phnom Penh, which wanted a treaty of nonaggression with the SRV rather than the Hanoi-proposed treaty of cooperation under which Cambodia would lose its independent and equal status with Vietnam.⁵⁸² Pol Pot’s refusal caused Hanoi to apply military pressure on the Khmer Rouge.⁵⁸³ Clashes along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border intensified from April 1977. On December 16, 1977, the SRV crossed the border and attacked Cambodia with a force of between 30,000 and 60,000 troops.⁵⁸⁴ On January 12, 1978, the Chinese government made its position clear by urging an immediate ceasefire and complete withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia.⁵⁸⁵ Beijing’s request deepened the Vietnamese hostility toward China. Finally, at the Fourth Plenum of the Fourth Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam in July 1978, the Vietnamese decided to identify China as the “direct enemy” of Vietnam, adopt an “offensive strategy” toward China, and regard it as a “national task” and “international obligation” to oppose China.⁵⁸⁶ As a result, the Sino-Vietnamese relationship sharply deteriorated in 1978.

⁵⁸⁰ The *People’s Daily*, May 14, 1979; and Guo Ming ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 136; Chen, *China’s War with Vietnam*, 49.

⁵⁸¹ William J. Duiker, *China and Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict*, 65. This policy was set at the Fourth Congress of the Vietnam Workers’ Party in December 1976. See Chen, *China’s War with Vietnam*, 33.

⁵⁸² Chen, *China’s War with Vietnam*, 34; William J. Duiker, *China and Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict*, 65.

⁵⁸³ Chen, *China’s War with Vietnam*, 34.

⁵⁸⁴ Edward C. O’Dowd, *Chinese Military Strategy in the Third Indochina War*, 36

⁵⁸⁵ Chen, *China’s War with Vietnam*, 35; and Guo Ming ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 161.

⁵⁸⁶ U.N. General Assembly, 36th Session. Letter dated 13 July 1981 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General. Supp. 1981 (S/14589). 14 July 1981; Chang Pao-min, *Kampuchea between China and Vietnam* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1985), 67; and Guo Ming ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 161.

A new crisis emerged in 1978 with the flight of ethnic Chinese refugees from Vietnam to China in 1978 exacerbated Beijing's resentment of Hanoi's behavior. Between 1975 and 1978 the unified Vietnamese government implemented a series of measures of socioeconomic transformation that severely struck the Chinese community in Vietnam, who were mostly businessmen and comprador bourgeoisie. The ethnic Chinese became the main targets for the burning sentiments of Vietnamese nationalists.⁵⁸⁷ From October 1977, Hanoi's policy toward the ethnic Chinese entered into another stage, which involved expelling Chinese residents from northeast Vietnam and putting more pressure on the ethnic Chinese in southern Vietnam.⁵⁸⁸ In May 1978, there was an exodus of overseas Chinese from northern Vietnam to southern China. On June 6, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC released a statement urging the Vietnamese government to stop the mistreatment of the overseas Chinese and to engage in negotiation with China to settle the problem of the ethnic Chinese.⁵⁸⁹ Between June 13 and July 24, the first round of negotiation was held in Hanoi, in which the Chinese government sought a flexible schedule to evacuate the Chinese but the Vietnamese wanted to limit the docking time. The negotiation ended without a substantial solution. The Chinese view was that the Vietnamese, who intentionally obstructed the progress of negotiation while continuing to expel the Chinese, were entirely responsible for the futile ending.⁵⁹⁰ On July 3, 1978, China announced the end of its assistance to Vietnam because Hanoi's unfriendly policy of exacerbating anti-Chinese sentiment and expelling the Chinese destroyed the minimal conditions necessary for Chinese experts to work in Vietnam.⁵⁹¹

The second round of negotiation on the issue of the overseas Chinese started on August 8, 1978, in Hanoi. This new round of negotiation neither resolved the problems of the overseas Chinese nor did anything to improve the colder and colder relationship between the two capitals. To Beijing, the Vietnamese not only rejected the "reasonable" proposals to settle the problems but also denied the reality of the harm that the Vietnamese government was doing to the overseas

⁵⁸⁷ Chen, *China's War with Vietnam*, 55.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁵⁸⁹ *The People's Daily*, June 10, 1978.

⁵⁹⁰ Guo Ming, ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 130.

⁵⁹¹ *Zhonghua Renming Gongheguo Rishi, 1978* (Daily History of the People's Republic of China, Vol. the Year of 1978) (Sichuan: Sichuan People Press, 2003), 187

Chinese. It was the Vietnamese, as the Chinese delegation argued, who closed the gate of negotiation, and the Chinese government thus had no choice but to suspend the negotiations on September 26, 1978.⁵⁹²

While the negotiations on the issue of the overseas Chinese were encountering a deadlock, a renewed border dispute occurred in August 1978. As early as October 1977, China and Vietnam had started a round of negotiations on the delimitation of their border. The Chinese government argued that most of the boundary line on land had been delimited since 1895 and the disputed area should be delimited by negotiation after a coordinated investigation by both governments. But Hanoi continued to insist that the Vietnamese-claimed sea boundary line should be included and recognized in the discussion. The Chinese could not accept this. In August 1978, the Vietnamese used the excuse that they were “busy with other things” to unilaterally terminate the negotiation.⁵⁹³ Meanwhile, a series of violent acts by the Vietnamese persecuting Chinese refugees near the border was reported by the Chinese government between August 25 and 26.⁵⁹⁴ Clashes on the border also increased from late August 1978. According to Chen Chu, the permanent representative of China to the United Nations, the Vietnamese had encroached upon the Chinese border in 162 places, carried out armed provocations against China on more than 700 occasions, and killed or wounded more than 300 Chinese border guards and civilians in the half year before the Sino-Vietnamese War.⁵⁹⁵ Between September and December 1978 Beijing sent one note per month to protest the Vietnamese encroachment upon Chinese territory. Those notes repeatedly warned that Hanoi needed to take full responsibility for the consequences of its provocation and encroachment on China.⁵⁹⁶

While the situation on the border was becoming aggravated, the imminent Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, which became obvious in November 1978, presented China with a strong

⁵⁹² Guo Ming, ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 132-133.

⁵⁹³ Guo Ming, ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 145-146; Xue Mouhong and Pei Jianzhang, *Dangdai zhongguo waijiao*, 276.

⁵⁹⁴ Chen, *China's Vietnam War*, 81; *The People's Daily*, August 22, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30, 1978.

⁵⁹⁵ U.N. Security Council. 34th Year. 2114th Meeting. Official Records of the 2114th Meeting. 23 February 1979 (S/Agenda/2114). Official Record. Nov. 1981.; Guo Ming, ed., *Zhong Yue guanxiyanbian sishi nian*, 116

⁵⁹⁶ See the *People's Daily*, September 19, October 27, November 8, and December 25, 1978.

challenge.⁵⁹⁷ The issue of China's response to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia emerged as a main agenda item when Deng Xiaoping visited Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore in early November 1978.⁵⁹⁸ A Chinese military intervention in Cambodia became a possibility when Wang Dongxing, a member of the CCP Politburo, visited Phnom Penh in November 1978 and received a request for Chinese intervention to help Cambodia resist the imminent Vietnamese invasion.⁵⁹⁹ Instead of sending military force into Cambodia, the Chinese decided to offer material aid and to support the Pol Pot regime to the end.⁶⁰⁰ Nevertheless, that decision did not fundamentally alter the track toward China's use of force against Vietnam in 1979. In September 1978, at a meeting of the General Staff of the PLA, the military leaders had noted that the Vietnamese were preparing for their invasion of Cambodia when the Chinese were discussing possible "punitive" measures against the Vietnamese. Some of the participants suggested that the "punitive" measure should be on a large scale, inflicting pain on the Vietnamese in order to stabilize the border and exert political influence upon the situation in Southeast Asia.⁶⁰¹ Right after the SRV invaded in Cambodia in December 1978, the CMC ordered the Guangzhou and Kunming Military Regions to be ready for military action against Vietnam by January 10, 1979.⁶⁰²

The Chinese decision-making process entered into a critical stage after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. An initial decision for a punitive war against Vietnam was proposed by Deng Xiaoping at a CMC meeting on New Year's Eve.⁶⁰³ This meeting basically decided the scale, targets, and timing of the military operation and appointed Xu Shiyu to command

⁵⁹⁷ William J. Duiker, *China and Vietnam: The Roots of Conflict*, 80. In addition to its preparation for the invasion, the SRV signed the Soviet-Vietnamese treaty with the Soviet Union on November 3, 1978.

⁵⁹⁸ Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First, The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000), 596-597 and 602.

⁵⁹⁹ Chen, *China's Vietnam War*, 37.

⁶⁰⁰ Geng Biao, "Secret Report," January 16, 1979, in *Studies on Chinese Communism* 166 (October, 1980), 150.

⁶⁰¹ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaojicanmouzhang de zishu* (Personal Recollection of a High-ranking Chief of Staff)(Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 1992), 242-243.

⁶⁰² Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 3 (2010): 14; and Zhou Deli, *Yige gaoji canmouzhang de zishu*, 246

⁶⁰³ Zhang Xiaoming, "China's 1979 War with Vietnam," 858; and Jin Ye, Hu Juchen and Hu Zhaocai, *Baizhan jiangxing Xu Shiyu* (Biography of General Xu Shiyu) (Beijing: PLA Art Press, 1999), 332.

operations from Guangxi in the east and Yang Dezhi to command operations from Yunnan in the west.⁶⁰⁴ The approval of the military plan, however, did not result in an immediate attack. On January 11, 1979, Deng appointed Yang Yong, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff, to investigate the situation on the border and in the frontier units.⁶⁰⁵ Yang presented his findings at a CMC meeting on January 22.⁶⁰⁶ His report convinced the participants to reaffirm that a military action against Vietnam would be needed.⁶⁰⁷ The next day, the CMC issued another schedule ordering the troops to be ready by February 15.⁶⁰⁸

For the Chinese, to obtain Washington's understanding of China's intention was one of the key considerations for making the war workable. This consideration was partly a result of Beijing's global strategy since the late Mao era, which held that China should pursue Mao's strategy of a global "horizontal line" (一條線, *yitiaoxian*) to establish a line of defense against the Soviet Union stretching from Japan to Europe to the United States.⁶⁰⁹ Also, Beijing needed Washington's support if it was to avoid being branded an aggressor by world opinion.⁶¹⁰ Thus, when Deng Xiaoping talked with top American leaders during his trip to the United States in late January 1979, he not only explained the need to "punish" Vietnam but also emphasized that the

⁶⁰⁴ Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's War Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 19-20; and Jin Ye, Hu Juchen and Hu Zhaocai, *Baizhan jiangxing Xu Shiyong*, 332.

⁶⁰⁵ Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yong jiangjun zhuan* (Biography of General Yang Yong) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 1991), 495.

⁶⁰⁶ In addition to Yang, the participants included Deng Xiaoping, Nie Rongzhen, Xu Xiangqian, and Geng Biao. See Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yong jiangjun zhuan*, 495.

⁶⁰⁷ Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yong jiangjun zhuan*, 495.

⁶⁰⁸ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaojicanmouzhang de zishu*, 257

⁶⁰⁹ Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's War Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 13; and Wang Zhongchun, "The Soviet Factor in Sino-American Normalization, 1969-1979," in William C. Kirby, Robert S. Ross, and Gong Li, eds., *Normalization of U.S.-China Relations: An International History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005), 158-164.

⁶¹⁰ The Chinese concern the international opinion can be found in Deng Xiaoping's request that all he asked Washington to do was to provide "moral support" for the Chinese punitive war against Vietnam during his trip of the United States. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser 1977-1981* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983), 409.

Chinese military action would be limited in scale and duration.⁶¹¹ Deng succeeded in obtaining U.S. understanding of China's decision to go to war.⁶¹²

This assurance of the American attitude toward the Chinese military action set the Chinese leaders' minds at ease to execute their war plan against the Vietnamese. On February 11, 1979, two days after Deng returned to Beijing, an enlarged CCP Politburo meeting was held, resulting in orders to the local commands in Guangxi and Yunnan to launch the attack against Vietnam on February 17.⁶¹³ On February 14, the CCP Central Committee issued an internal circular announcing and explaining the decision to go to war with Vietnam to the party organization of the provinces, military regions, and central government.⁶¹⁴ Three days later, Chinese troops began to cross the border to "teach a lesson" to the Vietnamese.

Analysis of Leaders

In the Chinese official justification, China's 1979 war with Vietnam was a punitive expedition prompted by the Vietnamese wrongdoings on the Sino-Vietnamese border. The wrongdoings the Chinese mentioned included the Vietnamese encroachments upon China's territory and the bloodshed and mistreatment involved in the expulsion of the overseas Chinese.⁶¹⁵ The Chinese also regarded their military action as a measure to restore order and peace in the southern region of China. Hence, this section begins with an examination of the influence of these Chinese official justifications upon the decision to go to war.

⁶¹¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 408-410; and Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 206-209.

⁶¹² Publicly, the American top leaders decided to not criticize the Chinese military alone but with a parallel condemnation of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and requested both China and Vietnam to pull out their forces. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 411. But privately both Beijing and Washington reached a tacit understanding that the U.S. would help China with intelligence monitoring of Soviet forces in the Far East. See Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 25.

⁶¹³ Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 25; Zhou Deli, *Yige gaojianmouzhang de zishu*, 259-260; and Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yong jiangjun zhuan*, 497.

⁶¹⁴ Zhang Xiaoming, "Deng Xiaoping and China's War Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 25; and *Sanzhongquanhui yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian* vol. 1: 58-61.

⁶¹⁵ *Sanzhongquanhui yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian*, vol. 1: 58-61.

The first time the Chinese brought up the idea of resolving the problems on the border by force was probably at a meeting of the General Staff in September 1978. This was after the Vietnamese had unilaterally ended negotiations on the border issue and when the negotiations on the evacuation of the overseas Chinese had encountered a deadlock. The purpose of that meeting was to discuss the possible options for countermeasures against the Vietnamese provocations on the border. In the meeting, Zhang Caiqian, one of the Deputy Chiefs of Staff, mentioned that “Vietnam oppresses cruelly a large number of overseas Chinese and expels them from Vietnam to China,” and “the Sino-Vietnamese border is unstable, where Vietnamese troops and Vietnamese police unceasingly provoke conflicts.” He then concluded that the participants needed to seek a countermeasure and report their suggestion to the central committee.⁶¹⁶ All of the participants agreed that to punish and suppress the “arrogant” Vietnamese, a military action should be considered.⁶¹⁷ With regard to the scale and objectives of the military action, the participants had two different opinions, even though the Combat Operation Command had already proposed a preliminary scheme for the punitive action. Some thought that the scale of punitive action should be small, with Trung Khanh⁶¹⁸ as the limit of the Chinese advance. Others thought that the military action should be on a large scale in order to ensure that the Vietnamese would be hit painfully. This kind of military action, they argued, would ensure the economic development of the border area on the Chinese side and exert political influence upon the people of Southeast Asia.⁶¹⁹

This meeting indicates that the Vietnamese encroachment on the border and mistreatment of overseas Chinese that occurred in mid-August would appear to be the initial stimuli leading to the Chinese attack. Regardless of what kind of military plan they supported, the participants in the General Staff Meeting all seemed to agree that it was necessary to restore the stability on the border that had been broken by the Vietnamese. Although the participants did not use this sort of language, it would seem that China’s leaders believed that a stable and peaceful border was needed to guarantee China’s economic development. And this stable and peaceful border could

⁶¹⁶ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaoji canmouzhang de zishu*, 240.

⁶¹⁷ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaoji canmouzhang de zishu*, 243.

⁶¹⁸ This area is about 10-12 kilometer far from the Sino-Vietnamese border.

⁶¹⁹ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaoji canmouzhang de zishu*, 243. These two opinions I will discuss more later.

be achieved by punishing the Vietnamese for their violent behavior. Deng Xiaoping⁶²⁰ may be the key person who took this line, especially after the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP in December 1978, where he consolidated his political position as the paramount leader of the CCP and announced a shift of China's national priorities to economic reform and an opening to the outside world.⁶²¹ For example, in his message of February 16, 1979, informing President Carter of China's final decision for war, Deng wrote: "We are forced to make the decision to undertake necessary self-defense operations against Vietnam." To justify the decision, Deng mentioned that the military action "may play a certain role to check the ambitions of Vietnam and will benefit the peace and stability of this region."⁶²²

This justification also appeared in Deng's comments on the causes of China's attack on March 16, 1979, after the Sino-Vietnamese War. One of Deng's reasons was to stabilize the border in order to sustain the economic reform. He said:

We want to develop the Four Modernizations. [In doing so,] we need a more stable and steady environment. Would it be OK, if [we] let the Soviet revisionists and the Vietnamese threaten us from the north and south and disturb us? It is not OK that we are discomposed...we rather want to take advantage of this opportunity to test and weigh [the Vietnamese]. The Vietnamese talk so big that they regard themselves as "the third military power in the world"...and [they] also set us up as their number one enemy and unceasingly created disturbances on our border. If we had not taken action to strike back, its [Vietnam's] arrogance would have been more and more swollen.... It [Vietnam] thought that we would be afraid of the Soviet-Vietnamese treaty. The Soviets succeeded in getting Afghanistan and Iran [into their sphere of influence], and are stepping up their pace in Vietnam and the East. [Those Soviet actions] have increased the threat to us; therefore, we need more stable and steady Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Soviet borders. To secure this condition [we need to] obtain the confidence that they would not dare to bully us at [their] will.... Thus, we would have the peace of mind to develop the Four Modernizations.⁶²³

⁶²⁰ Deng Xiaoping was CCP vice-chairman, vice-chairman of the CMC, deputy premier, and chief of the PLA General Staff in 1978. See Zhang, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 9.

⁶²¹ Zhang, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 10; and Ye Yonglie, *Cong Hua Guofeng dao Deng Xiaoping: Zhonggongshiyijie sanzong quanhu qianhou* (From Hua Guofeng to Deng Xiaoping: Before and After the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Party Committee) (Hong Kong: Tiandi Books, 1998), 522-528.

⁶²² Declassified Documents Reference System, <http://infotrac.galegroup.com> (document number: CK3100480164; accessed November 2, 2012).

⁶²³ Deng, "Speech after the self-defense counterattack against Vietnam," March 16, 1979. See <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/d3959bea6294dd88d0d26b42.html>

The Chinese military action, in Deng's view, was designed to ensure a favorable and stable situation for securing the development of the Four Modernizations. Deng presented China's national security and national interests as the major forces behind China's decision to use force. But Deng's judgmental language criticizing Vietnam as an arrogant actor implies that pragmatic calculation was not the only means he used to gauge the necessity of China's attack on Vietnam.

In fact, in describing the Vietnamese as misbehaving the Chinese were using language common in the CRWT as way to explain their launching of a counterattack that they described as self-defense. As they saw matters, the Chinese had unselfishly supported their Vietnamese comrades to fight against the U.S. in the Vietnam War. But the Vietnamese seemed not to appreciate what the Chinese had done for them. Moreover, the Vietnamese even intentionally mistreated and expelled the overseas Chinese in Vietnam and provoked conflicts resulting in many Chinese dead and wounded on the border. To the Chinese, those Vietnamese acts not only posed a threat to China's security but also revealed the ungrateful nature of Vietnam.⁶²⁴

The Chinese propaganda and diplomatic system also made a similar judgment when it delivered warning signals to the Vietnamese beginning in October 1978. In its protest of October 26, 1978, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs used the words "outrageous," "savage," and "vicious" to describe the Vietnamese provocations on the border and concluded that "the Vietnamese authorities need to take all of the responsibility for the consequences resulting from [their actions violating China's sovereignty]." ⁶²⁵ On November 10, a *People's Daily* editorial commented that

...after crazily opposing and expelling Chinese over the issue of the overseas Chinese, [the Vietnamese] further unceasingly provoke conflicts on the Sino-Vietnamese border and have nibbled up China's territory...this savage attitude to defy the Chinese people has reached the stage of intolerability...we seriously warn the Vietnamese authorities: immediately retract the dirty hands you have stretched into China's territory and stop the provocation and encroachment on the Sino-Vietnamese border! [You], the Vietnamese authorities, don't treat China's warning as a puff of wind passing the ear!⁶²⁶

On December 25, 1978, the *People's Daily* issued another editorial titled "There Is a Limit to China's Forbearance," which significantly increased the level of warning to the Vietnamese. It started with a comment:

⁶²⁴ *Sanzhongquanhuì yilai zhongyao wenxian xuanbian*, vol. 1: 58-61; and Liu Huaqing, *Liu Huaqing huiyi lu* (Memoir of Liu Huaqing) (Beijing: Jiefangjun chubanshe, 2004), 394.

⁶²⁵ The *People's Daily*, October 27, 1978.

⁶²⁶ The *People's Daily*, November 10, 1978.

In recent days, the Vietnamese authorities' provocations against China have become more and more unrestrained. Vietnamese armed forces have continually encroached upon Chinese territory, killing or wounding Chinese fishermen and residents of the border areas. Hanoi is intolerably unscrupulous in its bullying of China....

The editorial ended with a strong warning:

There is a limit to the Chinese people's forbearance and restraint. China has never bullied, and will never bully, any country; neither will it allow itself to be bullied by others. It will never attack unless it is attacked. But if it is attacked, it will certainly counterattack. China means what it says. We wish to warn the Vietnamese authorities that if they count on Moscow's support to seek a foot after gaining an inch and continue to act in an unbridled fashion, they will decidedly meet with the punishment they deserve....⁶²⁷

Strong condemnation of Vietnamese immorality also appeared in the private meeting where the Chinese leaders discussed the decision to use Chinese forces. On January 11, 1979, when Deng requested Yang Yong to investigate the situation on the border, he said:⁶²⁸

Please go to the front to see what the exact situation is. If they [the Vietnamese] still continue creating troubles and behave inhumanly, then for those wicked people requiting kindness with enmity we don't need to be polite. There is a limit to our forbearance. [If we] do not teach them a lesson, they will not behave, and we will also not feel at ease.

This instruction not only is congruent with the general Chinese perspective toward the Vietnamese, but also reveals how Deng rated the moral standing of the Vietnamese. To Deng, the possible Chinese military action was aimed to punish and caution the Vietnamese, whose wicked and ungrateful behavior exceeded the limits of China's forbearance.

A clearer record indicating the influence of the CRWT is probably the instruction issued by the enlarged Politburo meeting of February 11, 1979. The instruction read:

On February 17, the frontier forces of the Yunnan and Guangxi military regions will carry out a limited attack to strike at the aggressive arrogance of the Vietnamese troops and to defend the security of the border. China will not occupy an inch of Vietnam's territory, but also will not allow others to occupy an inch of our territory – this is what is called punishment. Chinese always scrupulously abide by [the belief in] ending war with war (*yizhanzhizhan*, 以戰止戰), the position of active defense, the use of military prowess to ensure peace (*zhigeweiwu*, 止戈為武), and [the doctrine that] "We will never attack unless we are attacked; But if we are attacked, we will certainly counterattack."⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ *Beijing Review*, December 29, 1978; and *The People's Daily*, December 25, 1978.

⁶²⁸ Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yonng jiangjun zhuan*, 495

⁶²⁹ Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yonng jiangjun zhuan*, 497.

Obviously, the Chinese adopted traditional wording to express their logic and justification for launching the attack, especially the idea of “the use of military prowess to ensure peace” (*zhigeweiwu*, 止戈為武). As we have already seen, this idea first appeared in King Zhuang of Chu’s comment on the purpose and meaning of military force, as recorded in the *Zuo Zhuan*. This indicates a direct linkage between the ideas of the CRWT and the Chinese leaders’ decision to go to war with Vietnam in 1979.

Behind the official justification of self-defense, the Chinese seem to have regarded their military action as a measure to stabilize the border by punishing the Vietnamese for their misbehavior. The Chinese consistently revealed that one of the goals of their military action was to stop the troubles the Vietnamese made on the border in order to sustain favorable conditions for economic development. But this calculation of China’s interests was not the only consideration influencing the Chinese leaders’ decision. The Chinese also presented their judgment of the moral standing of the Vietnamese when they were justifying their decision to punish them. In this case, the Vietnamese encroachment on China’s territory and mistreatment of overseas Chinese in Vietnam led the Chinese to believe that the SRV was so ungrateful and wicked that it deserved to be punished. The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia also had an effect on Chinese decision-making, which will now be examined.

It is important to clarify the time when the Chinese started to “seriously” consider military operation as the “necessary” measure to handle the situation that China had encountered since mid-1978. This starting time will significantly affect my inference regarding the influence of the Vietnamese military action in Cambodia upon Chinese decision-making. My starting point is Deng Xiaoping’s speech of March 16, 1979. In this speech, Deng mentioned that deciding to attack Vietnam had not been an easy process; instead, the Central Committee and CMC had come to that conclusion only after almost two months’ consideration and deliberation.⁶³⁰ The duration of the almost two months’ consideration is the key to trace the starting time of the Chinese decision.

According to President Carter’s recollection, based on his conversation with Deng Xiaoping, he concluded that the Chinese had already made up their mind to attack Vietnam before Deng’s

⁶³⁰ Deng Xioping, “Speech after the self-defense counterattack against Vietnam,” March 16, 1979. See <http://wenku.baidu.com/view/d3959bea6294dd88d0d26b42.html>

visit to the United States in late January 1979.⁶³¹ More recently, the military historian Zhang Xiaoming has also argued that Deng's trip to the U.S. was not an attempt to "test the water"; rather, Deng had already made up his mind before that time. The reason the Chinese did not attack in January was that they were not fully ready to execute the operation successfully.⁶³² According to these formulations, the Chinese had made their decision no later than January 28, 1979, the date when Deng Xiaoping left for the U.S.

The moves of Deng and the CMC in January 1979 also indirectly support this inference. Deng's January 11 instruction to Yang Yong to investigate the situation on the border suggests that as of that moment he had not yet made the final decision. According to Yang's recollection, his report of January 22 convinced the high-ranking leaders, including Deng, to reaffirm the necessity of China's attack on Vietnam.⁶³³ The CMC immediately issued an instruction on the next day demanding that the combat forces be ready by February 15.⁶³⁴ The chronological order of Chinese moves in late January confirms the inferences of Carter and Zhang, although the Politburo did not issue the final order to carry out the attack until February 11. Hence, projecting two months back from late January of 1979, the result indicates that the time when the Chinese started to seriously consider the necessity of China's attack on Vietnam should not be earlier than late November, 1978, or more specifically November 23, 1978. Chinese actions from late November through early December 1978 also support the importance of Vietnam's attack on Cambodia as a relevant factor triggering China's decision to go to war. At the meeting of the General Staff on November 23, the intelligence department of the PLA shared information regarding the imminent Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia with the participants, while the operations department proposed a revised and enlarged military plan.⁶³⁵ Right after the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia, the CMC immediately held a meeting on December 7 to discuss a military operation against Vietnam, and on December 8 ordered the Yunnan and Guangxi

⁶³¹ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 208-209

⁶³² Zhang, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 21-22; and "China's 1979 War with Vietnam," 859-860

⁶³³ Jiang Feng et al., *Yang Yong jiangjun zhuan*, 495

⁶³⁴ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaojicanmouzhang de zishu*, 257.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, 242-243.

military regions to be ready for war by January 10, 1979.⁶³⁶ These records suggest the critical influence of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, signs of which became clearer and clear from late November of 1978, upon the Chinese decision-making.

Although the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia affected China's decision for war, it seems that the logic used by China's leaders was not entirely the same as the justification of helping a small state resist a stronger state's invasion. The attack was very likely designed for the purpose of punishment rather than as an action to divert or stop the Vietnamese attack on Cambodia. The evidence for this inference can be traced in the meeting of the General Staff in September 1978. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of that meeting was to discuss a plan for military countermeasures in response to Vietnamese moves since the middle of 1978. Before the participants were asked to offer their suggestions, members of the intelligence department of the General Staff reported that the Vietnamese were highly likely to invade Cambodia. After learning this intelligence, some of the participants still suggested that the scale of China's attack should be tightly constrained, with the advance of Chinese troops stopping in the area of Trung Khanh and the objective being to annihilate a Vietnamese militia regiment. However, the same intelligence seemed to move another group of participants to take a tougher line in designing China's countermeasures. They suggested that China's attack should be strong enough to inflict real pain on the Vietnamese. One of them, Zhou Deli, the chief of staff of the Guangxi Military Region, estimated that a military action on a small scale would not have the effect of diverting the Vietnamese troops from invading Cambodia because so small a Chinese attacking force significantly threaten the vital parts of Vietnam. He further argued that Chinese military action on a small scale would not satisfy the people of Cambodia and Southeast Asia politically.⁶³⁷ In other words, Zhou Deli's intention was to help Cambodia's fight against Vietnam's attack through a massive Chinese invasion of the northern part of Vietnam. However, as will be seen, only parts of this suggestion were accepted by high-ranking Chinese leaders.

China's response to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia was one of the key issues when Deng Xiaoping visited Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore in November 1978. Especially during his trip to Singapore, Deng explained several times to Lee Kuan Yew how China would respond

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 246.

⁶³⁷ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaojicanmouzhang de zishu*, 242-243.

to the possible Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. When he talked about the situation in Southeast Asia, Deng mentioned that “the real and urgent problem was a possible massive invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam.” And what China would do? Deng answered that “what China would do would depend on how far the Vietnamese went.” Deng further analyzed:

If Vietnam succeeded in controlling the whole of Indochina, many Asian countries would be exposed. The Indochina federation would expand its influence and serve the global strategy of the Soviet Union to move southward into the Indian Ocean. Vietnam’s role was that of a Cuba of the East. The Soviets were drastically increasing their Pacific fleet. The world had witnessed great turbulence in the last two years as was evident from events in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, all pointing to a southward thrust by the South Union. China’s policy was to counter the strategic deployment of the Soviet Union, whether in Zaire or Somalia. Wherever the Soviet Union attacked, China would help to repel the attack. To have peace, ASEAN had to unite with China and repel the Soviet Union and its Cuba in Southeast Asia, Vietnam.⁶³⁸

When Lee later asked again about China’s response to the possible Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, Deng repeated his earlier formulation that what China did would depend on how far the Vietnamese went. But this time, Deng’s answer gave Lee an impression that “if the Vietnamese did not cross the Mekong River, it would not be so dangerous, but if they did, then China would do something.”⁶³⁹

Indeed, these formulations indicate that Deng’s thinking was largely influenced by a pragmatic and realistic view of China’s strategic environment, which regarded the Vietnamese military action in Cambodia as a Soviet strategic move. But Deng’s later commitment to the Chinese response presented a slightly different perspective from that of *realpolitik*. At another meeting with Lee, Deng promised that “China’s approach would not be affected by the conclusion of the Soviet-Vietnamese treaty of friendship and cooperation.” Then, with a deadly serious look, Deng concluded that “China would punish the Vietnamese if they attacked Cambodia,” and “China would make them pay a heavy price for it, and the Soviet Union would discover that supporting Vietnam was too heavy a burden.”⁶⁴⁰ Although the concern with countermeasures against the Soviet strategic moves was still influential, Deng’s solemn promise also gave prominence to the punitive character of China’s response to the possible Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

⁶³⁸ Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First, The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 596-597

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*, 597

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 601

Nevertheless, it seems that Deng's promise of a possible China's military action had not become the consensus among China's leaders as of early November 1978. The Pol Pot regime had asked the Chinese to dispatch forces to help the Cambodian fight against the Vietnamese when Wang Dongxing, a vice-chairman of the CCP, visited Phnom Penh between November 5 and 8.⁶⁴¹ The high-ranking Chinese leaders had a series of discussions on Pol Pot's request for China's armed support after Wang returned to Beijing. Su Zhenhua, the party political commissar of the PLA Navy and a CCP Politburo member, suggested that a naval detachment could be sent to Cambodia. Xu Shiyong, the commander of the Guangzhou Military Region, requested permission to attack Vietnam from Guangxi Province.⁶⁴² Neither request was approved by the Party Center. The reasons the CCP did not approve an immediate use of force supporting the Cambodians, presented in Geng Biao's speech in a CMC meeting on January 16, 1979,⁶⁴³ can be summarized as follows: First, as a socialist state, China's national policy was not to dispatch armed forces, airplanes, and warships to other states, and to oppose the states that did so. The Chinese were concerned that once they dispatched armed forces to Cambodia, not only would that principle be violated but it might also cause anxiety about China's intentions among the states in Southeast Asia. In this situation, China might lose its influence upon the Third World because the violation of principle would mark China itself as just the sort of hegemon that China had persistently opposed. Second, if China dispatched its armed forces into Cambodia before Vietnam did, the Chinese believed that they would lose their ground for criticizing the Vietnamese aggression in international arenas such as the United Nations. In their assessment, the Vietnamese were likely to make an unfounded countercharge branding China as the aggressor. Third, the complex circumstances of terrains, politics, and economics in Indochina would not allow a quick end to the conflict. Furthermore, China lacked the capability to engage in a war of attrition in that region. Fourth, China should not get bogged down in the mud, which was what the Soviet Union expected China to do in Indochina. In this situation, the Soviets and

⁶⁴¹ About Wang's trip of Cambodia, see the *People's Daily*, November 9, 1978.

⁶⁴² Geng Biao, "Secret Report," 150; and Zhang, "Deng Xiaoping and China's Decision to Go to War with Vietnam," 9.

⁶⁴³ Geng Biao was appointed as one of the vice-premiers of the State Council since 1978, and became the secretary-general of the CMC in January 1979.

Vietnamese would gain an upper hand in global opinion and obtain more strategic maneuverability against China.⁶⁴⁴

The Chinese attitude toward the use of force in Vietnam, however, became more and more resolute from late November 1978 when the Vietnamese preparations for attacking Cambodia became evident. On November 23, the CMC held a meeting to discuss the situation in Indochina and China's response. Chinese intelligence affirmed that the Vietnamese were about to launch an attack on Cambodia. Meanwhile, the General Staff proposed a revised military plan, which apparently was influenced by the participants urging a hard line policy toward Vietnam in the meeting of General Staff in September, to carry out a larger and longer military operation against Vietnam. This revised plan indicates that the preliminary scheme for the punitive expedition proposed by the Combat Operation Command in September, a small-scale use of force, was already insufficient to meet the new needs resulting from the latest developments in late November 1978. Obviously, the revised plan was designed to respond to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, although some Chinese generals were still uncertain of its efficacy. They estimated that the implementation of the revised plan might pin down some of the Vietnamese forces, but could not entirely stop them from carrying out the invasion of Cambodia.⁶⁴⁵

It should be mentioned that the plan to support the Cambodians by attacking Vietnam was not without dissent. In Zhou Deli's recollection, some leaders⁶⁴⁶ worried about the unfavorable consequences that the military action would bring. They thought that while China attacked the northern part of Vietnam to support Cambodia, the Soviets could attack the northern part of China in order to support Vietnam. In this case, China would be exposed to the predicament of a two-front war. Moreover, the United States, in their assessment, would enter the war only at an opportune time when it recognized that it could profit from intervention. Some of the dissenters argued that once China attacked Vietnam, China might suffer from an unfavorable climate of global opinion holding that China, a strong state, was bullying Vietnam, a small state. Moreover, the dissenters were also concerned that China, just recovered from the turmoil created by the

⁶⁴⁴ Geng Biao, "Secret Report," 150-152.

⁶⁴⁵ Zhou Deli, *Yige gaojicanmouzhang de zishu*, 245

⁶⁴⁶ Zhou Deli does not mention the specific names of the opposition. But Scobell points out that Chen Yun, Ye Jianying, and Wang Zhen were the major leaders who opposed the decision to go to war with Vietnam. See Scobell, *China's Use of Military Force*, 131-134.

Gang of Four, should concentrate all capacities on economic construction rather than a war that it could not afford.⁶⁴⁷

The voices favoring an attack on Vietnam emphasized that China, as a socialist state, had consistently supported states fighting in just wars and had earned a good reputation in Asia. Thus, they asked, “how could we be indifferent to the Vietnamese aggression abusing the sovereignty of another state,” and “how could we ignore the threat that the Vietnamese military power posed to the peace and tranquility of Southeast Asia?” They also added that the “evil talon” the Vietnamese used to seek hegemony had already reached China’s territory, severely damaging the normal life of the Chinese people and breaking the construction of the Four Modernizations. Hence, China should fight a war against Vietnam.⁶⁴⁸

The shift in the Chinese attitude toward the scale and objectives of their punitive expedition against Vietnam by late November 1978 is critical for examining the influence of ideas of righteous war upon the Chinese decision. The preliminary scheme of September 1978 indicates that initially the Chinese preferred a small and very restrained punitive action to a large-scale military action as the solution to the border problems. When the Vietnamese plan to invade Cambodia became increasingly evident in November 1978, the Chinese came to favor a stronger attack on Vietnam. This new attitude generated the revised plan of November 23 according to which China would execute a large-scale military action against Vietnam. As mentioned earlier, this shift of the scheme of use of force suggests that the imminent Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia had convinced the Chinese that their original plan no longer satisfied the newly developing needs – China had to respond forcefully to the Vietnamese aggression. However, based on their assessment, the Chinese generals understood that unless Chinese troops could present a severe threat to the Vietnamese (e.g., threatening to attack Hanoi), the ability of China’s military action to stop the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia was uncertain. In other words, unless the scale and ambition of China’s attack significantly threatened the survival of the SRV, the Chinese could hardly stop or divert the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia from being carried out. But as the dissents showed, if China did so, China’s military action might trigger a Soviet attack that would bring an unwanted two-front war. Apparently, the Chinese were aware

⁶⁴⁷ Zhou Deli, *Xu Shiyou de zuihou yizhan* (The Last Battle of Xu Shiyou) (Nanjing: Jiangsu People Press, 1990), 16.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid.

of this scenario while crafting the revised plan, in which the time, scale, and operational area of China's attack were limited. Thus, the revised plan seemed to be a scheme for a punitive expedition without the certainty of stopping the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

Moreover, the revision of the plan and the debate among China's leaders over the scale of the operation suggest an important role the ideas of righteous war might have played in decision-making when the Chinese were considering two different courses of action both suggested by pragmatic calculation. The Soviet factor indeed played an important part in the deliberations of the Chinese as they planned their attack on Vietnam. As the dissenting views mentioned above show, the Chinese worried that the Soviet response to China's attack on Vietnam would force China to engage in a two-front war.⁶⁴⁹ In this regard, a massive Chinese invasion of Vietnam would risk provoking the Soviet Union to launch a massive invasion of the northern part of China to support its Vietnamese ally. This kind of reasoning dictated that the best option for the Chinese was to carry out a small-scale military action. But this argument could not persuade those leaders who believed that China had the moral responsibility to support the Cambodians and to assure the states of Southeast Asia, such as Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia, that Vietnamese expansion would be checked.⁶⁵⁰ In their view, China should do more to respond to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in order to fulfill that moral responsibility. However, this does not mean that pragmatic calculation was entirely ignored in their assessment of China's decision to use force; rather, considerations of morality seem to have carried more weight in determining China's response to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. The revised plan of late November supports this inference about the influence of moral responsibility. On one hand, the revised plan would not be a prolonged invasion of Vietnam that might bog China down in the quagmire of an occupation of Vietnam and expose China to the danger of Soviet invasion. On the other hand, the scale of the revised operation was large enough to give the appearance of upholding China's commitment to support the Cambodians and perhaps satisfy the need to check Vietnamese ambition. In other words, the revised plan suggested a military operation with a strongly punitive character, in which China kept its promise by slapping the Vietnamese in the

⁶⁴⁹ In his secret report, Geng Biao also emphasized that the Chinese needed to be prepared for the possible Soviet invasion when they were attacking Vietnam. See Geng Biao, "Secret Report," 160.

⁶⁵⁰ This perspective can be found in Deng's talk with Lee. See Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First, The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 597-601.

face with a strength that not only had the potential to humiliate and discipline them but also was carefully calibrated to prevent a massive Soviet invasion of China.

A similar perspective was also revealed during Deng's visit to the U.S. in late January of 1979. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, before Deng's visit the issue of Vietnam's attack on Cambodia had been a major agenda item in the communications between Chinese and American officials. Chinese officials held that "the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia was a Soviet-sponsored aggression designed to strengthen Vietnam as a base for Soviet operations in Southeast Asia." This move, as the Chinese leaders argued, represented "a strategic threat to China's security, and a longer-range threat to the stability of Southeast Asia."⁶⁵¹ Messages from China's leaders gave Brzezinski an impression that Beijing was determined to retaliate against the Vietnamese who had invaded and displaced the Pol Pot regime, a close ally of China.⁶⁵²

At his first private meeting with President Carter, Deng informed him of China's decision to use force by repeating the same argument about China's countermeasure against the Soviet strategic deployment.⁶⁵³ Deng also added that China "considered the military action necessary to put a restraint on the wild ambitions of the Vietnamese and to give them an appropriate limited lesson."⁶⁵⁴ He further emphasized that the duration and scale of the "lesson" would be limited.⁶⁵⁵ What Deng requested of the U.S. was to offer "moral support" in the international arena.⁶⁵⁶ After hearing Deng's formulation, Carter expressed his concerns that the Vietnamese, who were increasingly isolated and subject to condemnation in the world community because of their aggression against Cambodia, would regain sympathy from some nations that would brand China as a culprit if Chinese forces moved toward Hanoi.⁶⁵⁷ Carter also pointed out that China's potential military move would not be congruent with the agreement Beijing and Washington achieved in their new relationship to contribute toward greater peace and stability in Asia.⁶⁵⁸

⁶⁵¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 409

⁶⁵² Ibid.

⁶⁵³ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 408-409; and Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 206.

⁶⁵⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 409.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷ Jimmy Carter, *Keeping Faith*, 206

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

Deng thanked Carter for his comments, but still insisted that “it was highly desirable for China that its arrogant neighbors know they could not disturb it and other countries in the area with impunity.”⁶⁵⁹

The next morning, Carter and Deng met again in the Oval Office. Carter gave Deng a handwritten note summarizing his reasons for discouraging a Chinese invasion of Vietnam.⁶⁶⁰ Deng expressed his appreciation for Carter’s comments, but reiterated that “China must still teach Vietnam a lesson”; otherwise, “the Soviets might use Vietnam the way they had used Cuba.” Deng also asserted that “China had the necessary strength to carry the operation through” and “it would be short, lasting only ten to twenty days.”⁶⁶¹

These formulations reflected a decision that mingled pragmatic calculation with considerations of morality. It was reasonable and feasible for the Chinese to win the understanding of the United States for China’s decision to attack Vietnam by emphasizing the threat that the Vietnamese military action in Cambodia, as an adjunct of Soviet strategic deployment, posed to the security of Southeast Asia and China. This pragmatic calculation would help the Americans make sense of China’s decision. But it is also worth noting that Deng adopted judgmental language to persuade the Americans and justify his decision at the same time.

Defining the attack as a punitive expedition is another key point for observing the influence of righteous war thought. From November 1978 onward, the Chinese consistently presented their attack as a punitive expedition. Deng used essentially the same language with Carter in late January 1979 and Lee in early November 1978, stating that China’s intention was to “punish” the Vietnamese wrongdoings. This idea is different from the idea of helping a small state to fight against a stronger state’s invasion, but similar to the idea of punishing a disobedient. In his research on Sino-Vietnamese relations, Zhai Qiang pointed out that in addition to their grasp of *realpolitik*, China’s leaders had fully inherited China’s historical legacy, which includes a Sino-centric view of the world that regards the small nations on China’s periphery, including Vietnam, as inferior and within the orbit of China’s influence.⁶⁶² Zhang Xiaoming has also argued that this

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibid., 208

⁶⁶¹ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, 410

⁶⁶² Qiang Zhai, *China and The Vietnam Wars, 1950–1975*, 6 and 219.

kind of worldview influenced the Chinese to make the decision to attack Vietnam.⁶⁶³ The Chinese leaders have always argued that China's attack was a punishment imposed upon Vietnam for its ingratitude and misbehavior. This formulation actually exposed the assumption that China's superior status, regardless of whether it is based on virtue or power, gives it the right to correct the wrongdoings and disobedience of inferior states – especially those nearby. The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia allowed the Chinese to manifest and amplify this sort of idea, especially in their condemnation of Vietnam's immorality.

Similar to their judgment of Vietnamese provocations on their border with China, China's leaders also regarded the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia as immoral and ungrateful behavior. Xu Shiyong was probably the most hawkish of the generals who had been urging an attack on Vietnam since early November 1978. After he learned of Vietnam's preparation for invading Cambodia, Xu made a very straightforward judgment:

How does such a little Vietnam dare to dominate Southeast Asia! It is too arrogant! There is no way to not teach it a lesson!⁶⁶⁴

After the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia, Deng also delivered a strong condemnation of Vietnam's immorality when he received Norodom Sihanouk, the former King and Prime Minister of Cambodia, on January 7, 1979. He said:

Recently, the Vietnamese expansionists launched a new war of massive aggression against Cambodia. [They] wantonly bombed everywhere, brutally slaughtered peaceful residents, occupied a tract of land, and committed a monstrous crime... The savage aggression and arrogant ambition of the Vietnamese authorities has been clearly exposed, [and it] caused the Asia-Pacific states and their people to be on alert. They understand that the bloodshed and insistence on combat of the Cambodian people was not only for defending their own national independence and sovereignty, but is also closely related to the security, peace, and stability of the Asia-Pacific states ... They...would never want to see the Soviets and Vietnam rampage and wantonly invade the region of Asia-Pacific.⁶⁶⁵

The condemnation of Vietnam's immorality was also found in Chinese diplomatic and propaganda warnings beginning from mid-December 1978. Especially in January 1979, condemnation of the Vietnamese actions in Cambodia as immoral became a significant part of China's warnings. On December 16, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement that:

⁶⁶³ Zhang, "China's 1979 War with Vietnam," 853-854.

⁶⁶⁴ Zhou Deli, *Xu Shiyong de zuihou yizhan*, 15.

⁶⁶⁵ *The People's Daily*, January 8, 1979.

The Chinese government and Chinese people resolutely support the just standpoint of the Cambodian government, and condemn the brutal behavior of the Vietnamese authorities who have invaded and subverted Democratic Kampuchea. This savage military invasion and subversion that the Vietnamese authorities have made against a sovereign state is the most serious and violent trampling on the doctrine of international relations, and a severe threat to the security and stability of the regions of Southeast Asia, Asia, and the Pacific. The Chinese government and Chinese people resolutely support the just combat of the Cambodian people defending their national independence and sovereignty.⁶⁶⁶

On January 7, the *People's Daily* released a commentary with the title "The Reckless Aggression Must Be Stopped," which strongly condemned the immoral behavior of the Vietnamese in Cambodia. It mentioned:

The Vietnamese authorities outrageously started a war of massive aggression against Cambodia... The Vietnamese authorities' war of aggression against Cambodia is a dirty war without a declaration of war... This war of the strong bullying the weak that the Vietnamese authorities are carrying out is a war vainly attempting to conquer an independent nation which is weak, and [it is] an unjust war [resulting from the Vietnamese authorities'] perfidy... This reckless behavior of the Vietnamese authorities tramples down every principle in international relations, completely exposing the extreme madness of the outward expansion of this emerging local-hegemonist... The Vietnamese authorities have become the malefactor violating the peace and stability of Asia and the World... To brotherly Cambodia which is suffering from such a brutal aggression, the Chinese people would never be indifferent. The Chinese people will continue to offer all kinds of help to the Cambodian people.⁶⁶⁷

On January 8, the *People's Daily* released another commentary on the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia with almost the same formulation. In addition, the *People's Daily* added what Deng had said in his talk with Sihanouk, that "the Vietnamese aggressor has committed a monstrous crime."⁶⁶⁸ Chinese propaganda reiterated the same statement on January 10 when the Xinhua News Agency released a report titled "Guilty of Perfidy, Requiting Kindness with Enmity" to condemn the Vietnamese wrongdoings.⁶⁶⁹ Meanwhile, similar condemnation was appearing in China's diplomatic offensive to gain support in the international arena. On January 15, 1979, when the Chinese government sent its letter condemning the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia to the U.N. Security Council, it used strong language to describe the Vietnamese misbehavior:

⁶⁶⁶ *Zhonghua Renming Gongheguo Rishi*, 1978, 336

⁶⁶⁷ The *People's Daily*, January 7, 1979.

⁶⁶⁸ The *People's Daily*, January 8, 1979.

⁶⁶⁹ The *People's Daily*, January 10, 1979

...in late December last year, the Vietnamese aggressors...launched a frenzied and savage aggression on an unprecedented scale against Democratic Kampuchea in defiance of the strong opposition of the world's people and the stern condemnation of international opinion.⁶⁷⁰

These formulations indicate that the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia reinforced the Chinese belief that the SRV was ungrateful and vicious, especially when the Chinese leaders used “arrogant,” “savage,” and “monstrous” to describe the Vietnamese. These words imply that the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia confirmed the Chinese assignment of an inferior moral status to the SRV, which may have helped convince them to make the decision to attack Vietnam. China’s propaganda activities in January also support this inference. The *People’s Daily* concentrated its condemnation more on the immorality of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia than on their provocations on the border in January 1979, when the Chinese decision-making process entered the critical stage. It seems that the reaffirmation of the moral inferiority of Vietnam helped the Chinese to confirm their decision to attack it as the righteous thing to do.

This review of Chinese thinking shows that both the Sino-Vietnamese border disputes and the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia affected the Chinese decision to attack Vietnam in 1979. The Sino-Vietnamese disputes, especially the Vietnamese encroachment on China’s territory, allowed the Chinese to justify self-defense by armed force. However, the justification of self-defense did not convince the Chinese to carry out a large-scale attack at the initial stage. Until late November 1979 when the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia was imminent China’s leaders had not favored a large-scale military operation. To the Chinese, the decision to go to war was for more than self-defense and the stopping of the Vietnamese violence; rather, it was a punishment imposed on Vietnam for its wrongdoings and disobedience.

Analysis of the People’s Daily

This section examines the morality-based condemnation of the Vietnamese in the *People’s Daily* before the outbreak of the Sino-Vietnamese War. The period examined starts from July 3, 1978, when the Chinese government officially ceased all of its assistance to the SRV. This move was the most significant sign of the end of the close relationship between the PRC and SRV and an important turning point in China’s Vietnam policy. The examination ends at February 17,

⁶⁷⁰ U.N. Security Council. 34th Year. *Letter Dated 14 January 1979 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council*. Supp. 1979 (S/13030). 15 January 1979.

1979, the outbreak of Sino-Vietnamese War. The total days of observation are 230. The items observed include reports and comments on the Vietnamese encroachments on China's territory, the Vietnamese government's mistreatment of the overseas Chinese, and the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. The total number of morality-based condemnations is 385, which yields a daily average of 1.67. This rate occupies the second highest rank among the six cases included in this study.

To examine variation in the use of morality-based condemnation, I set December 6, 1978, as the watershed date. As mentioned above, the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia had an important impact on China's decision to use force against the SRV. Hence it is proper to use the date of Vietnam's attack on Cambodia as the critical moment for China's leader to make the decision. This watershed divides the entire period into two stages: from July 3 to December 6, 1978, and from December 7, 1978, to February 17, 1979. There are 175 days of observation in the first stage, and 73 days in the second stage. The *People's Daily* used a total of 193 words of morality-based condemnation in the first stage, which results in a frequency of 1.229 as the daily average. A total of 192 words were used in the second stage, which yields a frequency of 2.63 as the daily average.

Apparently, the Chinese doubled their morality-based condemnation after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. This result suggests that Chinese propaganda significantly lowered its evaluation of Vietnam's moral standing after the SRV attacked Cambodia. This is congruent with my assumption that an increased frequency of morality-based condemnation should correspond with the outcome of a Chinese decision to go to war. This variation of the frequency implies that when the Chinese government places increased emphasis on the moral inferiority of its opponent, then China's decision for war may be expected.

Conclusion

Evidence from this case does not damage my hypothesis about the influence of the CRWT; rather, it shows that the ideas of the CRWT had the potential to encourage China's leaders to decide to go to war. The just causes that these Chinese leaders used to legitimize their decision resembled the justifications of self-defense, stopping violence, and punishing disobedient states that are part of the CRWT. The Chinese initially pondered a military action for self-defense in September 1978 when the series of Sino-Vietnamese negotiations deadlocked and the

Vietnamese encroachments on China's territory showed no sign of ceasing. China's leaders regarded their potential military action as a measure to restore order and stability on the Sino-Vietnamese border. But the preliminary scheme of China's military operation suggests that the justifications of self-defense and stopping violence did not lead the Chinese leaders to decide upon a large-scale punitive expedition.

The Chinese significantly altered their attitude to favor a massive attack on Vietnam after the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia in December 1978. This period witnessed the influence of the CRWT upon the process of the shift of the Chinese leaders' mind-sets. The Vietnamese move not only convinced China's leaders that China's security had been significantly threatened, but also helped them to reaffirm that Vietnam deserved to be punished by China. Moreover, some Chinese leaders seemed to believe that China should do more to respond to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia so as to fulfill the moral responsibility they shouldered. This perspective is slightly different from the idea of helping a small state to fight against a stronger state's invasion, but is similar to the idea of punishing a disobedient state. This kind of thinking seems to have derived from the strategic relations among China, the Soviet Union, and the SRV in late 1978. As Chinese generals calculated in private, unless China carried out a massive attack even larger than what was actually done in 1979, China could not completely stop the Vietnamese armed forces from invading Cambodia. Such a massive invasion would expose China to the danger of a Soviet invasion of the northern part of China. This pragmatic calculation discouraged China's leaders from undertaking a massive invasion of Vietnam. However, the Chinese also believed that unless the Vietnamese had been properly punished, China would lose its reputation and superior moral standing. This consideration of morality or keeping promises persuaded them to design a sophisticated plan for limited war which not only satisfied the need to support the Cambodians by humiliating the Vietnamese, but also avoided the danger of engaging in a two-front war with the Soviet Union and the SRV. This train of thought was revealed in Deng's conversations with the American leaders in late January, when he explained that China's military action was to punish the "arrogant" Vietnamese who were bullying their neighbors.

The examination of China's condemnation of Vietnam's immorality also supports the view that elements of righteous war thinking influenced Chinese decision-making. The Chinese consistently regarded the SRV as an ungrateful state that returned China's kindness with enmity. Vietnamese encroachments on China's territory and the SRV's mistreatment of the overseas

Chinese convinced the Chinese that their judgment was correct. The Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia led the Chinese to reaffirm the inferior status of the Vietnamese, who were ungrateful and wicked. This judgment reinforced the Chinese leaders' determination to launch a war against Vietnam.

The analysis of the *People's Daily* yields a result congruent with the analysis of leaders. The Chinese media doubled its morality-based condemnation of Vietnam after the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia. This variation suggests that the Chinese affirmed the inferior moral status of the SRV when decision-making was entering a critical period in January 1979. It also can be found in this case that China's leaders emphasized the righteous cause for their decision after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia. This congruent result presents a pattern similar to those found in the cases of the Korean War and the Sino-Indian War, where we see both the expression of righteous cause during decision-making and an increased frequency after the critical moment for decision. This result supports my assumption that a Chinese decision for war is likely to occur when the Chinese reaffirm the righteous legitimacy of their cause by highlighting the moral inferiority of their opponent.

Chapter 9 - Conclusion

This research has examined the role that the Chinese tradition of righteous war played in the process by which China's leaders decided to go to war during the period from 1950 to 1979. In this study, I argue that the Chinese concept of righteous war was applied by Chinese leaders as a frame of reference to establish the legitimacy of a decision to go to war. This framework includes two major ideas: righteousness-based justification and competent authority. The justifications of stopping violence, punishing a disobedient state, helping a weaker state against a stronger state's invasion, and self-defense are regularly defined as the righteous causes for going to war in the CRWT. The identification of competent authority is often relevant to the perception of moral standing, in which a war can be justified by facing an opponent morally inferior to oneself. When the decision for war has been justified within this frame of reference, the Chinese are prone to put that legitimized decision into action.

Moreover, the Chinese concept of righteous war may play a more important role in the decision for war when Chinese leaders encounter an impasse in which two opposite courses of action are suggested by their calculations. The righteous legitimacy of one course of action may encourage Chinese leaders to enter a war even when the likely consequence may not appear to favor the Chinese. Also, the Chinese concept of righteous war can also enrich Johnson and Tierney's theory about the shift of actor's mind-sets in decision making because the CRWT may function as a catalyst for the shift.

Findings

The findings from the case studies and analyses of the *People's Daily* in this project are supportive of the main line of interpretation of the study as a whole (see Table 9-1). Although it is hard to demonstrate that the CRWT had decisive influence, this research has found that Chinese assessment of just cause based on the CRWT may have exerted influence under certain circumstances, such as in the documentary evidence of Chinese decision making in the cases of the Korean War, the Sino-Indian War, and the Sino-Vietnamese War.

Table 9-1 Results from the Cases

	Debate on course of action	Perceived war as imminent	Visible influence of the CRWT	Freq. of morality-based condemnation	Decision for war
1950	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased	Yes
1958	No	No	No	Negligible	No
1962	Not Clear	Yes	Yes	Increased	Yes
1964-1965	No	No	Partial	Decreased	No
1969	No	Partial	No	Decreased	No
1978-1979	Yes	Yes	Yes	Increased	Yes

In the cases of the Korean War and the Sino-Vietnamese War, the concept of righteous war not only was applied by China's leaders to establish the legitimacy of China's decision for war, but it also encouraged the Chinese to make such a decision when another train of pragmatic thought urged an opposite course of action. In the case of the Korean War, Mao and Zhou highlighted the justification of saving North Korea from ruin to persuade their comrades that sending forces to fight in Korea was the right decision, even though some viewed intervention in support of North Korea as a poor strategy based on their calculation of China's own interests. China's leaders acted similarly in their decision making for the attack on Vietnam in 1979. The concept of righteous war encouraged China's leaders to decide upon a large-scale punitive expedition when some of them had favored a very limited military action based on their concerns about the strategic relationship among China, Vietnam, and the Soviet Union, in which China would face a two-front war if a Chinese attack on Vietnam provoked Soviet retaliation.

The case of the Sino-Indian War provides moderate evidence supporting my argument about the CRWT. Mao made a moral assessment of the situation China faced during his decision-making. The concept of righteous war seemed to help him establish the legitimacy of military action against India and eventually to convince him to make the final decision for war. But the other leaders seem only to have used righteousness-based justification to legitimize the decision after it had been made.

All these cases suggest that the Chinese concept of righteous war had the potential to alter Chinese leaders' thinking in making decisions. In the case of the Korean War, Mao's statements

offer more convincing evidence that the application of the CRWT and the shift of mind-set occurred simultaneously during the critical stage of his decision making. This pattern is also found in the case of the Sino-Indian War, where the process of legitimizing the decision and the shift in mind-set occurred simultaneously in Mao's final decision making. In the case of the Sino-Vietnamese War, the establishment of righteous legitimacy drew China's leaders closer to the final decision for the attack on Vietnam after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.

The cases without the outcome of China's decision to go to war help to clarify the circumstances in which the influence of the CRWT is unlikely to be felt. Those cases indicate that when the Chinese-identified just cause has not actually been met, China's leaders would not initiate the implement of a decision for war. The application of the CRWT can be found in the cases of the Vietnam War and the Sino-Soviet border conflict, as a frame of reference for legitimizing the possible Chinese decision to go to war. Especially in the case of the Vietnam War, Mao made a clear pronouncement on the morality of war to the effect that a Chinese use of force outside Chinese territory would be regarded as a crime, and it would not be a crime only if there were a legitimate cause.⁶⁷¹ At the same time, these two cases point to the limits of the influence of the CRWT upon Chinese decision-making. In 1964 and 1965, the Chinese did not carry out a Korean War-style intervention in the Vietnam War because the Chinese-identified preconditions that would provide legitimate causes were never realized, due to the fact that the U.S. did not attack China or launch a massive invasion of North Vietnam. The underlying thinking of Chinese leaders' moves in 1964 and 1965 was the same as in the Korean War, when the trigger for intervention was met, but that trigger was never reached in the Vietnam War.

In the Sino-Soviet Border Dispute, the Chinese assessment of Soviet invasion provided the just cause of self-defense to China's leaders. However, the Soviet Union did not launch the invasion as the Chinese feared and the risk was eased by the communication between Chinese and Soviet leaders (especially Zhou and Kosygin). This indicates that the precondition for the Chinese to implement their decision for self-defense was not met in 1969. Moreover, the case of the Sino-Soviet conflict shows that the consideration of righteous war did not override pragmatic calculation when the Chinese were making the decision for self-defense against the danger of a

⁶⁷¹ In this case, either China was attacked by the U.S. or North Vietnam was suffering from a massive U.S. invasion could render the legitimate causes.

superior opponent's invasion. This suggests that the traditional Chinese concept of righteous war would exert no visible influence upon decision-making when the Chinese leaders were confronting a scenario in which China was in danger of being invaded by a superior enemy.

The case of the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis suggests another circumstance limiting the influence of the CRWT when China's leaders intended to engage in a low-intensity conflict. In this case, the issue of morality seemed to be a negligible factor in the considerations that led the Chinese leaders to initiate the shelling in 1958. This indicates nothing more than that the Chinese concept of righteous war exerted no visible influence upon Chinese decision making when the Chinese attempted to conduct a strategic probing by means of low-intensity conflict.

Another supportive finding results from the analysis of the *People's Daily*, which examines the Chinese government's use of morality-based condemnation in the six cases. The results indicate that the Chinese government consciously applied morality-based condemnation to its opponents. In the cases of the Korean War, the Sino-Indian War, and the Sino-Vietnamese War, the frequency of the morality-based condemnation evidently increased after Chinese decision making had entered a critical stage. Moreover, in all of those cases we find the preconditions for the influence of the CRWT on decision making as well as statements and remarks by the Chinese leaders showing traces of that influence. This congruence pattern suggests that the morality-based condemnation used in the *People's Daily* was not just for public consumption but reflected the actual thinking of the leadership. In the cases where a decision for war was not the outcome, the Chinese government either decreased or maintained the existing level of morality-based condemnation once the need for a decision to go to war had receded. Although those findings may reflect Chinese threat perception at the time, they also indicate that the Chinese government will further emphasize the legitimacy of a decision for war only when such a decision is likely. Moreover, the variation in the use of morality-based condemnation is helpful for distinguishing between the actual influence of the CRWT, where the frequency of condemnation should increase, and the superficial presentation of legitimacy, where the frequency should either decrease or remain at its existing level.

Implications

This study presents a theoretical implication for future studies exploring China's behavior in using of force. Morality was not an irrelevant issue for the Chinese when they were considering

the decision for war. As the results show, the Chinese leaders would conduct moral assessment of their decision for war through a frame of reference based on the Chinese concept of righteous war. The Chinese concept of righteous war would likely convince the Chinese leaders to resort to force on a large scale, when the principles of morality demanded. This finding suggests that the assessment of righteous legitimacy can be regarded as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition triggering a Chinese decision to go to war. For this reason, it is best not to exclude Chinese thought about the justice of war from future studies exploring the pattern of China's use of force.

Two implications for policy can be drawn from this study. First, the Chinese expression of the concept of righteous war in a foreign crisis in which China is involved deserves the attention of any analyst or policy maker who attempts to forecast China's pattern of use of force. As my analysis of the statements of China's leaders between 1950 and 1979 has shown, their expressions of just cause not only reflected the bottom line of their decision to go to war, but also could be treated as signals forecasting China's moves if the preconditions justifying action were met. Their language used in the *People's Daily* to condemn the moral depravity of China's opponents provides a useful supplement to observe Chinese decisions. In this regard, a Chinese decision for war is most likely to occur when the Chinese escalate their morality-based condemnation of their opponents. This can help the intelligence or analytical community to monitor China's use of force more precisely by integrating the observation of Chinese moral condemnation.

Second, breaking a deadlock by communication may be a good method to avoid a Chinese decision to go to war. This research indirectly confirms that the Chinese prefer to adopt non-violent methods over the resort to force to resolve foreign crises. This does not mean that policy makers should concede whatever China wants in order to avoid direct confrontation, but awareness of this Chinese propensity may be useful for policy makers seeking to buy time through diplomatic maneuver or gain advantages in negotiations.

Direction of Future Research

The results of this study provide three directions for further academic research. First, as implied by the case of the Sino-Soviet border conflict presented here, there is a need to investigate how the ideas of the CRWT functioned in different types of war. This investigation will further enhance our understanding of Chinese concepts of righteous war. Second, in addition

to *jus ad bellum* which has been discussed in this dissertation, the concepts of *jus in bello* and *jus post bellum*, to borrow the Western terms, are worth further examination for a more complete understanding of the influence of the CRWT upon China's decisions for conducting warfare. As the cases of the Sino-Indian War and the Sino-Vietnamese War show, the Chinese unilaterally withdrew their forces to end the conflict. Those acts suggest that the Chinese concept of righteous war may exert influence not only on China's decision for war but also on its decision to end a war. Third, it is worthwhile to explore the function of the CRWT in other periods of Chinese history. The period being tested in this research tells only a partial story of the CRWT. To further understand the CRWT, there is a need to investigate other periods when the CRWT may have had more influence on the Chinese government, such as the Ming, Northern and Southern Song, Tang, and Han dynasties.

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Appendix A - The Levels of Hostility in the MID Dataset

Source: Jones, Daniel M., Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer. "Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1819-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*. 15, No. 2: 163-213.

Definitions of Threats of Force in MID Dataset	
Action	Definition
Threat to use force	threat by one state to use its regular armed forces to fire upon the armed forces or violate the territory of another state
Threat to blockade	threat by one state to use its ships, airplanes or troops to seal off the territory of another state, so as to prevent either entry or exit
Threat to occupy territory	threat by one state to use military force to occupy the whole or part of another state's territory
Threat to declare war	threat by one state to issue an official declaration of war against another state
Threat to use nuclear weapons	threat by one state to use all or part of its nuclear arsenal against the territory or forces of another state.
Definitions of Displays of force	
Action	Definition
Alert	reported increase in the military readiness of a state's regular armed forces
Mobilization	activation by a state of all or part of its previously inactive forces.
Show of troops	public demonstration by a state of its land based military forces, not involving combat operations (e.g., maneuvers)
Show of ships	public demonstration by a state of its naval

	military forces, including a purposeful display of naval forces outside the territorial waters of a targeted state
Show of planes	public demonstration by a state of its airborne capabilities (e.g., repeated air space violations).
Fortify border	explicit attempt to publicly demonstrate control over a border area through the construction or reinforcement of military outposts to defend or claim territory.
Nuclear alert	increase in military readiness of a state's nuclear forces.
Border Violation	crossing of a recognized land, sea or air boundary for a period of less than twenty-four hours by official forces of one state, without any force being used on the territory (or population) of the targeted state or any significant public demonstration of military force capability.
Definitions of Uses of force	
Action	Definition
Blockade	crossing of a recognized land, sea or air boundary for a period of less than twenty-four hours by official forces of one state, without any force being used on the territory (or population) of the targeted state or any significant public demonstration of military force capability.
Occupation of territory	use of military force by one state to occupy the whole or part of another state's territory for a period of more than twenty-four hours. The immediate occupation after a war by the victorious side's army is not coded as an incident unless provisions of the treaty are violated by the

	occupying forces or further militarized incidents are undertaken by the state being occupied.
Seizure	capture of material or personnel of official forces from another state, or the detention of private citizens operating within contested territory. Seizures must last at least twenty-four hours to be included.
Clash	outbreak of military hostilities between regular armed forces of two or more system members, in which the initiator may or may not be clearly identified.
Raid	use of regular armed forces of a state to fire upon the armed forces, population, or territory of another state. Within this incident type, the initiator can be clearly identified and its action is not sanctioned by the target.
Declaration of war	official statement by one state that it is in a state of war with another state
Use of CBR weapons	use of chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from the arsenal of one state employed against the territory or forces of another resulting in less than 1,000 total battle deaths per dispute